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THE POLITICAL THOUGHT
OF
PLATO AND ARISTOTLE

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BY

E. BARKER, M.A.

LATE FELLOW OF MERTON COLLEGE, OXFORD

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PLATO AND ARISTOTLE

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B.C.

- 890-820. Date assigned by Thucydides (I. 18) to the legislation of Lycurgus.
- 688. Tyrtaeus came from Athens to Sparta.
- 600. Zaleucus gave the Locrians the oldest written laws known in Greece.
- 640. Charondas gave laws to Catana.
- 620. Laws of Draco at Athens.
- 594. Solon's legislation.
- 589. Pittacus *æsymnete* at Miletus.
- 585. Thales *floruit*. (Anaximander is called by some his "companion," by others his "disciple".)
- 560. Peisistratus becomes tyrant at Athens for the first time.
- 548. Theognis *floruit*.
- 532. Pythagoras *floruit*; also Phocylides.
- 509. Constitution of Cleisthenes.
- 504. Heraclitus *floruit*.
- 490. First Persian War.
- 480. Second Persian War.
- 475. Organisation of the Delian League.
- 460. Pericles lessens the power of the Areopagus at Athens: introduction of pay for the jurors.
- 448. Anaxagoras *floruit*.
- 445-431. Peace between Athens and Sparta: Pericles' ascendancy.
- 440. Protagoras *floruit*.
- 431-404. Peloponnesian War.
- 428. Birth of Plato.
- 427. Gorgias of Leontini comes to Athens: *orator* at Corcyra.
- 411. Revolution at Athens, led by Antiphon and Theramenes: polity of the 5,000.
- 404. End of the Peloponnesian War: the Thirty at Athens.
- 403. Restoration of the Athenian democracy.
- 401. Xenophon and the retreat of the Ten Thousand.
- 400. Aristippus of Cyrene and Antisthenes the founder of the Cynics pupils of Socrates.
- 399. Death of Socrates.
- 398. The Iphicratean peltasts defeat a Spartan mora.
- 397. Peace of Antalcidas: Plato's first visit to Sicily—after which, possibly, the composition of the *Republic* is begun.
- Birth of Aristotle.

B.C.

371. Defeat of the Spartans at Leuctra : Spartan decline.
 368. Plato's second visit to Sicily.
 367. Aristotle comes to Athens, and studies under Plato.
 361. Plato's third visit to Sicily ; after which comes the composition of the *Law*.
 347. Plato's death : Aristotle leaves Athens for Atarneus.
 343. Aristotle goes to Macedonia as Alexander's tutor.
 338. Philip's victory at Chæronea, "fatal to liberty".
 336. Congress at Corinth. Alexander "general plenipotentiary" of Greece : semi-federal constitution for Greece. Decay of the City-State.
 335. Aristotle returns to Athens and founds a school. The *Politics* delivered as lectures. Archaizing revival at Athens under Lycurgus.
 323. Death of Alexander : death (according to tradition on the same day) of Diogenes the Cynic.
 322. Death of Aristotle.
 264. Death of the Stoic Zeno. (He is said to have lectured in his school for fifty years.)
 167. Date of Polybius' exile.
 55 (*circa*). Cicero's *De Republica*.

A.D.

- 400 (*circa*). St. Augustine.
 520 (*circa*). Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophi*.
 600. Isidore made Bishop of Seville.
 845-882. Hincmar Archbishop of Reims.
 1156. The *Polycraticus* of John of Salisbury completed.
 1244. Bracton one of the Justices Itinerant.
 1260-1270. William of Moerbeke's translation of the *Politics* into Latin.
 1264. *Song of Lewes*.
 1274. Death of St. Thomas Aquinas.
 1280 (*circa*). The *De Regimine Principum* of Aegidius Romanus.
 1302. Dante's exile. The *De Monarchia* composed in exile.
 1324. Composition of Marsilio's *Defensor Pacis* (or perhaps 1342).
 1373. Nicholas Oresme's *Tractatus*.
 1430 (*circa*). Lionardo Aretino's translation of the *Politics*.
 1442. Fortescue Chief Justice of King's Bench.
 1460. Ficino begins his translation of Plato.
 1495-1498. First printed edition of the *Politics* (the Aldine Aristotle).
 1516. More's *Utopia* published. Composition of Machiavelli's *Prince*.
 1576-1580. Bodin's *De Republica*. The *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos*.
 1594. The first part of Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity* published.
 1599-1626. Campanella imprisoned at Naples.
 1651. Hobbes' *Leviathan*.
 1676 Spinoza's *Tractatus Politicus*.
 1680. Filmer's *Patriarcha* published (though written earlier).
 1690. Locke's *Two Treatises on Civil Government*.
 1748. *L'Esprit des Lois*.
 1761. *Contrat Social*.

THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF PLATO AND ARISTOTLE

INTRODUCTION

POLITICAL thought begins with the Greeks. Its origin is connected with what may be called the secularity of the Greek mind. Instead of projecting themselves into the sphere of religion, like the peoples of India and Judea, instead of taking his world on trust, and seeing it by faith, the Greeks took their stand in the realm of thought, and daring to wonder about things visible, they attempted to conceive of the world in the light of reason. It is a natural instinct to acquiesce in the order of things presented in experience. It is easy to accept the physical world, and the world of man's institutions, as inevitable, and to raise no question either of man's relations to nature, or of the relations of the individual to institutions like the family or State. If any such questionings arise, they can readily be stifled by the answer out of the whirlwind: "Shall he that cavilleth contend with the Almighty?" But such acquiescence, natural in all ages to the religious mind, was impossible to the Greek. He had not the faith which can content itself with the simple reference of all things to God. Whatever the reason (whether it was due to the disturbing effect of early migrations, or to a civic organisation in many commonwealths, preventing the rise of one universal and majestic Church), the fact is indisputable, that the religious motive appealed little to the Greek.¹ Nor had he, therefore, that sense of the littleness of human thought and endeavour, which might induce him to regard himself as a

Origin of
political
thought in
Greece

¹ Reverence for the local deities of the city springs from a political rather than a religious motive.

thing other than that which the State constantly enforced as such? If there was such a discrepancy, how had it arisen, and how had a communion come to be formed which enforced a conception of justice different from that of the natural man? Such were the questions which, it seems, would naturally arise (and which did arise in Athens during the fifth century) as a result of the peculiar character of political life in Greece. The detachment of the individual from the State, which is theoretically a necessary condition of political science, had already been attained in practice, in the life of the "city"; and the Greek citizen, thoroughly as he was identified with his city, was yet sufficiently independent, and so far a separate moment in the action of the community, that he could think himself over against it, and so come by a philosophy of its meaning. In other words, the Greek "city" depended upon a principle, unrealised but implicit, of rational coherence; and just because that principle was already implicitly there, it was the more easy for conscious reason to apply itself to the solution of the problem of political association.

In yet other ways did the existence of the city-state afford a basis for political thought. Unlike the States of the Oriental world, it was not stationary: it possessed a principle of growth, and had known a cycle of changes. Sparta was the one State of the Greek world which had maintained a steady tradition of unbroken continuity in its government: in other cities there had been a development which had almost everywhere followed the same order, from monarchy to aristocracy, from aristocracy to tyranny, from tyranny to democracy. These changes must have conduced in two ways to the growth of political thought. In the first place, they accumulated a number of data for inquiry. Instead of any single type of constitution, history presented a variety; and while speculation may be silent before a single instance, a number of types inevitably suggests comparison and discussion. But it may be suggested that the last of these types furthered the growth of political thought still more directly. Aristocracy had not given way to democracy without a struggle; and democracy had still to maintain itself against the claims of wealth and nobility. On the ground of theory, as well as in actual life, this struggle made itself felt.

Constitutional
change
political
though

code of conduct peculiar to itself. Such a code found its sanction in the force of public opinion by which it had been created. Concentrated and intense, that opinion bore upon each individual with a weight which we can hardly imagine: where each knew his neighbour (and this is one of the conditions which Aristotle postulates for a proper city), and each was concerned about his neighbour's behaviour, it would be hard for any man to go against the tone and habit of his city's life. The city formed a moral being, with a set character of its own; and its members, as the funeral speech of Pericles shows, were conscious of the individuality of their city, and could contrast its character with that of others. A political consciousness had thus developed in the Greek States. Each was aware of itself as a rounded whole, possessed of a moral life, created and sustained by itself; and it expressed this sense in the conception of the "self-sufficingness" or *αὐτάρκεια* of each political unit. Because it was self-sufficing, each State claimed to be self-governing: *αὐτονομία* flowed inevitably from *αὐτάρκεια*; and an inherent right of independent existence was postulated for every city. No wonder, then, that men began to discuss the value of each of these distinct types, or that the political consciousness of a separate individuality issued in political reflection.

It would thus appear that the political condition of the city-state tended to produce a growth of political thought, first, because the city was a self-governing community whose relation to its members demanded investigation; secondly, because the city had gone through a process of growth which at once supplied the data for thought, and, in its last stage, administered an impulse; and, lastly, because the co-existence of different types of cities, each conscious of its own identity, suggested a comparison of types and the search for the ideal. / But the political thought, which deals with the city-state, is inevitably coloured by the peculiar conditions of its subject. The *πόλις* was an ethical society; and political science, as the science of such society, became in the minds of the Greeks particularly and predominantly ethical. The constitution is to Aristotle the State; and the constitution is not only "an arrangement of offices," but also "a manner of life". It is more than a legal structure: it is also a moral

Greek political thought connected with Ethics

and that of moral law. Political science is a trilogy. It is a theory of the State; but it is also a theory of morals and a theory of law. It contains two subjects, which have since been removed from its scope, and treated as separate spheres.

From this conception of political science there flow certain differences between Greek political thought and our modern Greek thought. The conception of the State as an ethical association for the attainment of virtue meant a conception of the relations of the State to the individual different from any current to-day. Although, as has been said, the Greek regarded himself as one who counted for what he was worth to his community—although he regarded himself as a moment in the life of the whole, that he did not endeavour to assert his rights against the whole. Secure in his social value, he did not trouble about his individual “person”. And hence, from an ethical point of view, and from the conception of the State as a moral association, Greek thought always postulated a solidarity which is foreign to most modern thinking. The individual and the State were so much one in their moral life that the State was expected and was able to exercise a power of coercion which seems to us strange. Both by Plato and by Aristotle the positive inculcation of goodness is regarded as the mission of the State. They start from the end and they look for the means by which its life and purpose may be impressed upon the individual. To the modern thinker the conception of the State is preventive: its function is the removal of hindrances (rather than the application of a stimulus) to the moral life. We start from the individual: we regard him as entitled to certain rights (only too often of “natural” rights independent of social recognition), and we expect the State to guarantee these rights and, by so doing, to secure the conditions of a harmonious growth of character. We are anxious that the interference of the State should not introduce too much autocracy into the life of its members. Our motto is—Better the good act done from within, than the whole enforced from without.

of, and for, the legislator. The Greeks believed that the different tones and tempers of their States were due to the action of sages like Lycurgus or Solon, who had cast the moulds in which the lives of their fellows were ever afterwards shaped. The customs which had grown by quiet accretion from many minds, the institutions which the accidents of war and its conditions of climate had fashioned, the manners and habits which luck had suggested and imitation made inveterate—all these were to Greece the laws of a Lycurgus, or still more primitive Minos. It is indeed a natural and universal instinct to refer what has been the slow process of a people's mind to the fiat of the greatest of its sons; and if it gave Greece the figure of Lycurgus, it has also given England the figure of Alfred. But it is an instinct which would seem to have been particularly present in the Greeks. It may be, that their artistic temper demanded that institutions should appear as the rounded product of a single chisel: it is certainly true that the colonial expansion, which is so great a feature of Greek history, involved the action of real and historical legislators. In any case, the figure of the legislator seems to occupy the minds of political thinkers. They regard themselves as imaginary law-givers, drawing, as the first-born of their thought, the full plan of what should be, and sketching next the proper lines on which the given and actual may be rebuilt. If an actual legislator had thus made the past, why should not a philosopher make the present, moulding matter according to his will, as the legislator had done before? There is always this practical bent in Greek political thought. The treatises in which it issues are meant, like Machiavelli's *Prince*, as manuals for the statesman. Particularly is this the case with Plato. True to the mind of his master Socrates, he ever made it the aim of his knowledge that it should issue in action; and if the tales of his Sicilian experiences are true, he even attempted to translate his philosophy into action himself, or at any rate to induce Dionysius to realise the hopes of the *Republic*. Nor shall we do justice to Aristotle unless we remember that the *Politics* also is meant to be "the delight of whoso wisheth" to found a colony, or to reform a State. As the *Ethics* is intended to make men good, so the *Politics* is meant to preserve and improve States.

does not mean that they had forgotten the indicative. To be able to know and to assert the truth is the aim of political science to Aristotle, even though he generally expresses himself in the imperative, and—by dividing science into theoretical and practical, and classifying politics as practical—emphasises the value of the science of politics as a director of practice.

We have now seen what were the main peculiarities of the political thought which the city-state produced. It was a thought which conceived the State as a moral association, and, as a result, approached its subject from an ethical point of view. It was a thought which was so closely allied with practice, that it always conceived itself as pre-eminently a practical study. One feature of Greek politics still presents itself, as of vital importance in determining the course of Greek political thought, a feature of the pathology rather than the physiology of the State, but one which, just because political thought was practical and medicinal, had all the greater effects upon the line of its movement. The Greeks, to use Hegel's terminology, never distinguished with sufficient clearness between "society" and "State" between the complex of economic classes, who by their different contributions form the social whole, but are immersed in individual interests, and the neutral, impartial and mediating authority of the sovereign, who corrects the individualism of society in the light of the common interest of which he is the incarnate representative. Much depends on keeping the State distinct from society, on preserving the mediatory and corrective authority pure and intact from the influence of the interests which it controls. To secure such a distinction, such an integrity, is as much a concern of the modern State as it was of the ancient. There is still the danger that some social class, some economic interest, may infect the purity of the State, and, capturing the powers of the Government, direct them to its private advantage. On the other hand, there is always a danger that the State may harden into a repressive crust, which prevents the free growth of society, as it may be said to have done in the later days of the Roman Empire, when such organs of society as the *municipium* or *collegium* were rigorously regimented and controlled. From this point of view it may be argued that the play of society ought to modify the action of government, and

the problem of discovering a scheme, by which the different might work harmoniously, and manufacture and agriculture both be protected, without any detriment resulting to from the preference shown to the other. Such a *concordia* Plato sought to attain in the *Republic*, by the creation of a class of governors detached from society by a system of communism—an attempt at once to differentiate “State” and “Society,” and to discover an organ for the realisation of the common good. The same aim was pursued by Aristotle, but by different means. In opposition to Plato, who sought to institute a human sovereign, Aristotle fled to the conception of an impartial and dispassionate law as the true sovereign of the State. Realising, however, the need of human agency to enforce the law, he came alive to the truth that laws are what men make them by the manner of their enforcing, he sought in the “middle class” the mediator and arbitrator between contending factions. Neither extreme rules, but the middle class, which shares in the interest of both, is supreme, then in its supremacy the *concordia* is established, and the common good has found its way to its realisation.

Far we have regarded the city-state, and the general condition of its life, as the material with which political thought occupied, and to which it adjusted its conclusions. But it should be noticed, in conclusion, that there were two States in particular which occupied the attention, and helped to determine the character of both Plato and Aristotle. The two were Athens and Sparta—pre-eminently and particularly Athens. In Athens Plato and Aristotle spent the best part of their lives; and Athenian customs were those which they naturally observed. But it was only facts like these which make their political philosophy the philosophy of Athens: it was the fact that in Athens there was a developed political life, with its appropriate and regular institutions which had attained to full self-consciousness. Whether philosophers admired the development, here was a full and complete specimen of its kind for their study: whether or no they had their theory, they had a theory to examine. Freedom was claimed as a birth-right; and by freedom men understood the right of “living as one liked” in social matters, and the sovereignty of the majority in political affairs. Equality

expression which the individual attained in Athens, with the order and the unity which the State enforced in Sparta.

No political philosophy can be detached from its environment in history; and most of the great works of political thinkers, the *Prince* of Machiavelli, the *Leviathan* of Hobbes, the *Contrat Social* of Rousseau, have something of the nature of political pamphlets addressed to the conditions of their times. Plato and Aristotle show this tendency all the more strongly, because they had a conception of political science as a practical and remedial thing. Especially is it visible in Plato, who had more of the spirit of a prophet and reformer than had Aristotle, and was therefore led to address himself still more to actual tendencies and conditions. But in dealing with the works of both, we have always to remember, not only the general character of the city-state of which they spoke, but also the peculiar temptations and difficulties which it had to face; nor must we forget, that while they are speaking of city-states and their temptations, they have always in the back of their minds those two States, whose rivalry had distracted Greece in the Peloponnesian War, and whose opposing aims and traits so obviously challenged attention and comparison. Their philosophy is of the Greek, and for the Greek; nor was it until the city-state was being absorbed in the empire of Macedon that a new type of experience, more analogous to our own, suggested to the Cynics and Stoics a political theory, with which a modern mind can readily sympathise. From the theory of the city-state philosophy leapt to a theory of the world-state: from the theory of the world-state it has turned back in modern times to that of a nation-state. Yet through all its mutations it has retained a fundamental unity. Even if Greek philosophy is a philosophy of the Greek and for the Greek, yet the Greek was a man, and his city was a State; and the theory of the Greek and his πόλις is, in all its essentials, a theory of man and the State—a theory which is always true. The setting may be old-fashioned: the stone itself remains the same. We do not therefore come to the study of the philosophy of the city-state, as to a subject of historical interest: we come to the study of something, in which we still move and live. The city-state was different from the nation-state of to-day; but it was only different in the sense that it

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was a more vital and intense form of the same thing. In the individual might realise himself more easily and clearly a part of the State, because its size permitted, and its system primary government encouraged, such realisation. In studying it we are studying the ideal of our modern States : we are studying a thing, which is as much of to-day as of yesterday because it is, in its essentials, for ever.

CHAPTER I

THE PRE-SOCRATICS, SOCRATES, AND THE MINOR SOCRATICS

PROVERBIAL THOUGHT AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE

§ 1. **T**HE beginnings of political and of moral philosophy in Greece are to be found in isolated apophthegms (*ρήματα βράχεια ἀξιωμακόμενευτα*, as Plato says), the product of the proverbial stage of thought, in which single aperçus are tersely expressed in a brief sentence. The time has not yet come for the reflection which sees life steadily, and sees it whole; but experience has taught, or inquisitive eyes have seen, some facet of the truth, and the sparkle which has thus been caught has been preserved for ever in some saying. Such sententious maxims were dear to the Greeks; and in the tragedies of the fifth century there are still many to be found. But the stage of proverbial thought appears in its purity partly in the sayings of the Seven Wise Men, partly in the writers of elegiac or even epic verse. Here we find something of a philosophy, sometimes marked by a crude utilitarianism, sometimes by homely expressions of a deeper truth. The Seven Wise Men were for the most part statesmen; and scattered among their ethical sayings, such as *μηδὲν ἄγαν*, we naturally find political truths like *ἀρχὴ ἄνδρα δείξει* ("Office will prove the stuff of which a man is made"). Plutarch, indeed, in the *Convivium Septem Sapientium*, introduces the Seven Sages in the act of discussing the conditions necessary to the greatest happiness of a State, and he professes to give the opinions held by each of the seven. Plato tells us that the fruits of their wisdom were dedicated by the seven in congress to the Temple of Apollo at Delphi.¹ The Ampictyons inscribed their sayings

¹ *Protagoras*, 343 B.

State into its desired haven, Alcæus "cannot comprehend the strife of winds" which buffets the ship of state at Mitylene, where Pittacus is ruling as dictator; and Tyrtaeus' verse is not only a trumpet-call to battle, but a political sermon in praise of law-abidingness (*εὐνομία*).

§ 2. The next epoch in the history of Greek political thought is that which is marked by the influence of natural philosophy. Here we reach the age of reflection. Puzzled by the riddle of the physical universe, seemingly composed of many elements, yet liable to changes which transmuted each one of these into another, men cast about to find the one identical, the single substratum of matter which underlay all the elements, and from which they all proceeded. This single substratum of matter, however it might be conceived, they called *φύσις*—Nature. It is perhaps too readily assumed, that before Socrates men studied Nature alone, and that thinkers were first induced by his example to study Man (*ἡθνη*).¹ But the conclusions at which the pre-Socratics arrived about Matter were not mere theories of physical scientists dealing with a problem of chemistry: they were, to those who propounded them, solutions of the riddle of the universe. As such, they applied to the life of man as much as they did to the life of the earth. Conclusions with regard to the elements of physical nature and their mutual relations involved similar conclusions about the elements of man's moral nature and the connection of those elements—about the elements of the State and the scheme by which they were united. This step from the physical truth to its moral counterpart was perhaps made most readily by the Pythagoreans of the fifth century, when they turned the ritual of Pythagoras into a system of philosophy. The unity to which they had reduced physical elements was not a material substance, such as was postulated by most of the Ionic philosophers, but the more immaterial² principle of number. Such a principle was easily extended to the moral world of man's conduct. The under-

Pythagorean-
ism

¹ Aristotle, however (on whose dicta this assumption is based, cf. *Met.*, 987 b 1-4, 1078 b 17-19), while he speaks of Socrates as *περὶ τὰ ἠθικὰ πρῶτος*, does not say that he was the first to turn to Ethics, but that he was the first to introduce definitions, and that he introduced them in the sphere of Ethics.

² It is true that the Pythagoreans regarded number as extended in space.

more spiritual content and a deeper truth. Justice is an adjustment, but an adjustment which gives to each of the spiritual factors which go to form the State—reason, spirit and appetite—its right and proper place. In Aristotle's theory of "particular" justice the formal and numerical aspect of the Pythagorean conception is still more obviously present. The theory of distributive and corrective justice in the fifth Book of the *Ethics*, and the application of a theory of justice to commerce in the first Book of the *Politics*, owe something to Pythagorean teaching.¹

Thus, then, had the Pythagoreans helped the growth of political science by their application of the principles of natural philosophy to the State. A later generation assigned to Pythagoras himself the tenets of his later disciples, and believed that Pythagoras had attempted to realise them in practice. Tradition told of a club of Three Hundred founded by Pythagoras at Croton, which consisted of young men trained, like the Platonic guardians, in philosophy, and, like them, governing the State in the light of their philosophy.² The Pythagorean principle *κοινὰ τὰ τῶν φίλων* ("The goods of friends are common property") was interpreted into an anticipation of the communism advocated by Plato. We may, however, regard these traditions and interpretations as a later reading of Platonic ideas into the mind of "the master": *ipse non dixit*. The Pythagorean order was in reality a body of Disciples, meeting both to hear the mysteries of ritual and taboo and to join in vegetarian *syssitia* (the basis of the supposed communism), and interfering in politics, as it did at Croton, only because its members formed an aristocratic club, and because any aristocratic club would naturally try to influence the State.³ In this indirect way philosophy (such as

¹ Aristotle (*Ethics*, v., 1132 b 22) objects to the Pythagorean definition of justice as mere requital. Such a definition disregards motive, in the sphere of distributive justice (which awards differences of worth. But he holds that "*probond* of the State. It serves the State as the mind and distribution: it regulates the general dealings with other: it is the basis of commercial exchange, the only as he has received. that the Three Hundred were taught that the world was ruled by the power of number, and were meant to influence the State by their example. But Pythagoras was an Ionian!"; Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 94-95.

left its course, finds its counterpart in the saying that the people must fight for their law as much as for their city's walls. This parallel between the law of the world and the law of the State appears also in Anaximander, when he speaks of the physical elements as "suffering sentence of *justice* and paying the penalty one to another for their *injustice*," and explains thereby the phenomena of change. But Anaximander is here arguing, not from Nature to man, but from what he regards as the inevitable law of human conduct to Nature;¹ and the same may be true of Heraclitus. Yet there is some ground for thinking that Heraclitus argued from physics to politics, and not from politics to physics. He held that truth lay in τὸ ξυνόν, the common and identical substance of reason.² To this "the thinker must cling, and not to his own wisdom, even as a city should to law". All the more should a city hold fast to the law which was its ξυνόν, and therefore the truth of its practical life, because "all human laws are sustained by the one divine law, which is infinitely strong, and suffices, and more than suffices, for them all". Thus are human laws explained by the physical law of the world: the physical law vivifies the laws of the moral world. Laws are emanations of that one law: they are embodiments of the common substance of reason, which is fire. This line of thought led Heraclitus to adopt an aristocratic temper. "Though wisdom is common, the many live as if they had a wisdom of their own"; but "what wisdom or sense have the masses? many are evil, few are good". "The Ephesians ought to hang themselves: they have expelled Hermodorus, the best man among them, saying 'Let there be no best man among us'." Yet "one man is as good as ten thousand to me, if he be the best". Here we see something of a Platonic character in Heraclitus: the one man who has clung to the common (who has seen, as Plato would say, the Idea of the Good) is better than any many-headed Demos. And yet again there is something in Heraclitus of the Stoic cosmopolitan: the "wise man" is wise by clinging to the common unity of reason which pervades all the world; and the ideal State of such a man will be, in the long run, a State which embraces the world.

¹ Cf. Professor Burnet, *International Journal of Ethics*, vii., 328 sqq.

² This substance Heraclitus conceived materially as fire.

Some of the Ionic philosophers exercised an influence on actual politics; and it is noteworthy that here, as in regard to the Pythagoreans, there is no divorce between theory and practice, between philosophy and politics. When Plato and Aristotle busied themselves with writing practical works on politics and even (it may be) with actual attempts to influence politicians, they had many examples before them. Heraclitus, as we are told, refused to take any part in public life at Ephesus, though he was at any rate "king" of Ephesus, the priest of a branch of mysteries; and Thales is reported to have urged the Ionians of Asia Minor to unite in a federation with its Capitol at Teos. The report comes from Herodotus: the suggestion of a federal State is remarkable. Like Thales, the Eleatic philosophers also exercised an influence in Politics. Parmenides is said to have given laws to Elea: Zeno, his pupil, is recorded by Strabo to have deserved well of his State, and is said to have attempted to defend its liberty against a tyrant. A like activity is also recorded of Empedocles of Agrigentum. He would appear to have been a democratic leader in his native city, and a champion of equality: he destroyed the caucus of the Thousand, and was offered but refused the position of king.

natural analogies in political thought at Athens

It is when we turn to the Athens of the later fifth century, that we first find any real political thought, existing as a substantive and independent fact. However much attention the physical philosophers may have paid to political life, their political theory was but an off-shoot of their cosmology, and an accident of their attempt to find a material substratum out of which the world of change was produced. When we attempt to discover what Athenians were thinking in the later fifth century, we seem to see men reflecting primarily about politics and the world of man's conduct and institutions: if they turn to physics, it is "by way of illustration," and to get examples (which, they fancy, will serve as proofs) for their political ideas. Physical science had come to Athens with Anaxagoras, during the ascendancy of Pericles, who may have introduced the philosophy of Ionia to Athens as part of a policy of imparting to the Athenians "something of the flexibility and openness of mind

¹ Aristotle illustrates his practical wisdom, in the first book of the *Politics* by the story of the "corner" in oil-presses.

characterised their kinsmen across the sea".¹ Archelaus, a disciple of Anaxagoras, and according to tradition master of Socrates, was, we are told by Diogenes Laertius, one of the physicists, and the first of the moralists, deliverer of lectures on law and justice. Under such impulses it would not be surprising that at Athens, somewhere about 430 B.C. or soon afterwards, physical analogies began to be drawn by thinkers who sought to defend the existence of the State in general, and the democratic constitution in particular; for, as it has already been pointed out, the defence of democracy is the natural beginning of political thought. Nature was conceived by these thinkers in a teleological scheme—not, however, as fulfilling an ultimate end, but as having for its aim and object the setting of an example to man. In this way, the transition would appear to have been finally made from physics to ethics. If matter alone was considered, it was only considered in order to arrive at conclusions about man. The results of the philosophers of the Minor Academy, who had postulated some one material substance as the basis of the physical world, were so far adopted, that men began to look for the example of unity which appeared in Nature to justify the necessity of the State as the condition of human unity. This line of thought was naturally opposed to the views of those Sophists, who were preaching, as we shall see, that the State did not exist by Nature, but only by convention. On the contrary, the example of Nature itself was used to explain the necessity of the State. But where, it may be asked, is evidence for this line of thought to be found? In the works of Euripides. A German critic has disinterred, and rejected from scattered hints in Euripidean plays, a political theory which he would connect with the period and school of the Minor Academy.² The motive of this treatise was a parallel between the order of the State and the order of the world, by which a government under the sovereignty of law was justified, and government was proved to rest with a middle class (consisting apparently of peasant farmers), similar to that which the revolution attempted to put into power. That Euripides should have

¹ *Archelaus*, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

² The main passages are *Orestes*, 917-22; *Suppliants*, 399-456, 238-45; *Phoenissae*, 105-51 (Dindorf's text). See Dümmler, *Prolegomena zu Platons Staat*, 191.

too there are some traces of this early method of using Nature by way of illustration; and we find more than once in the *Republic* the use of physical analogies to justify political views. But in Plato political thought has become part of a whole system; and the State appears as a necessary element in the scheme of the world. There is no argument from physical nature to things moral or political; the two are not independent entities, but united as embodiments of one Idea, which constitutes both.

“The State is by nature prior to the individual,” said Aristotle; and it would certainly appear, from what we have seen, that discussion of the nature of the State preceded discussion of the individual. It was natural that men should turn from considering the riddle of the universe itself (for Greek thinkers began with the greatest first) to consider next the riddle of a smaller *κόσμος*, and the meaning of the State. Nor should we expect the Greeks, believing as they naturally did that the State was a moral being and each citizen a member thereof, to begin otherwise than with the State, when they turned from things physical to things human. But with the Sophists we seem to enter a new atmosphere. In their teaching (at any rate, in the teaching of those whom Plato discusses) there is a detachment and even a glorification of the individual. Political thought seems to be sufficiently developed to run into individualism. A new and revolutionary spirit begins to appear. Hitherto the conception of *φύσις* had been used in a conservative sense: it had served to justify the existing order of things, and to sustain the ancient *mos majorum*. Pythagoreans had found in their interpretation of “Nature” a basis for justice: Heraclitus had been led by his sense of the stability of “the common” to emphasise the majesty of human law: the Athenian thinkers who had used the conception of Nature had found therein a reason for the State’s existence. When we come to the Sophists we still find *φύσις* a current term; but *φύσις* is now subversive. Opposed to *νόμος*, or convention, it supplies a standard by which

a similar history is attempted, to a fifth century model. He also suggests that the treatise contained suggestions about the salvation of constitutions, and about the different kinds of democracies, which Aristotle followed. But his evidence is not conclusive.

Catana. Here was an obvious making of law by man: was all law of a similar institution? Had legislators everywhere laid down laws (*νόμους τιθέναι*): had peoples everywhere adopted laws (*νόμους τίθασθαι*)? If so, the conclusion was natural, that the State and its law was either the creation (*θέσις*) of an enacting legislator, or the convention (*συνθήκη*) of an adopting people. The State was made by hands: it was either the work of a Lycurgus, or a "contract" of primitive man.

While the process of history was leading to such results, the growth of human thought was tending in the same direction. New knowledge had been collected by travellers and recorded by logographers. Much was known of the customs of different peoples and tribes, and considerable attention was devoted to Anthropology, in the Athens of the fifth century.¹ The idyllic usages of Nature's children, the uncontaminated Hyperboreans or the unspoiled Libyans, served social reformers as arguments in favour of communism or promiscuity. If a study of anthropology led to any scientific conclusion, it must have driven men, contemplating the infinite variety of savage customs, to doubt the existence of any natural or universal law. The laws of Nature are the same to-day and yesterday, in Greece and in Persia: fire burns everywhere, and at all times. But here were ten or a hundred different customs of marriage, or burial;² nor was there any one thing, it might well be thought, which was "common and identical" everywhere. There could be nothing here which was the product of Nature: it must all be the product of man. Law was a convention: the State itself was based on a contract.³ Thus, while the study of physics had worked towards the conception of a single underlying substratum of all matter, the anthropological study of the human world worked towards the conception of an infinite diversity of institutions. The old relation was inverted: Nature abode by one law, and

¹ Aristotle himself, in the next century, was to collect a record of savage customs.

² Herodotus notes the differences of custom with regard to burial: Eupipides remarks on the manner in which some people make merry over a funeral, and some make lamentation.

³ The same ideas were applied to the problem of language, and attempts were made on the one side to show that language had a natural origin (*φύσει*) in involuntary exclamations, on the other to prove that it was a code upon which men had agreed (*θεσει*) for ease of intercourse. See Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, E. T., i., 394 sqq.

men hovered between many. Physics and anthropology stood opposed to one another; and their opposition issued in the antithesis of φύσις and νόμος.¹

A new movement of thought in the fifth century, which also tended to issue in the conception of man as the maker of institutions, is to be found in the *Aufklärung* headed by the Sophists. A great war of national defence, like the Persian wars, must in any case have given an impulse to freedom of thought, by increasing both national and individual self-consciousness. "Proud of their achievements," Aristotle says, "men pushed further afield after the Persians wars: they took all knowledge to be their province, making no distinction, but seeking wider and wider studies."² In Athens this awakening, comparable to that of Elizabethan England, was still more vigorous than elsewhere. Political change followed close on the war of independence. The hegemony of the Delian league intensified Athenian pride; while the political changes which took place within Athens itself opened a free field for popular discussion in the assembly and the courts of law, and attached a practical value to ability to think and capacity to express one's thoughts. It was the work of the Sophists at once to express this new self-consciousness, and to satisfy the practical demand both for new ideas and for words in which to clothe them.

The Sophists

Broad and general as was the new movement, so broad and so general was the work of the Sophists who sought to be its teachers. Some are philosophers. Some again are grammarians; and they raise the fundamental question of the origin of language—"Is it of human creation, or a natural thing?" Some are logicians, eager to discuss conceptions like "the Same" or "the Different," or to argue upon the nature of predication. Most of them, and pre-eminently Gorgias, are rhetoricians, for rhetoric is what the young politician desires; and most of them, again, have views about morals and politics, for everybody is

¹ The *Antigone* of Sophocles indicates another path by which men advanced to the distinction of φύσις and νόμος. The law of the State forbids Antigone to bury her brother: a higher law wills that she should. "The unwritten laws, whereof no man knoweth whence they come" (*Antigone*, 453-57; cf. *Edipus Tyrannus*, 865 sqq.) must over-ride the laws of the State. The problem of a "conflict of laws" seems to have attracted Sophocles: it recurs in the *Ajax*.

² *Politics*, 1341 a 30-32.

interested in such things. But these views vary from hedonism to a defence of traditional morality, and from an apology for tyranny to a defence of the reign of law. The Sophists are versatile: "they are the historical romancers, the theosophists, the sceptics, the physiologists of their day".¹ The acme of sophistic versatility was Hippias of Elis, who once appeared at the Olympic games dressed in garments altogether made by his own hands, and who was poet and mathematician, mythologist and moralist, student of music and connoisseur in art, historian and politician, and a voluble writer in every capacity. It was not *what* the Sophists taught—for they were far from forming a school, or from holding one set of opinions: they were free lances, one and all—it was the *fact* that they taught, that they were the first professional teachers of Greece, and that their teaching was meant to give practical help in politics, which made them *what* they were. To go to the Sophists was to go to the university—a university which prepared men for their after-life, and which—since that life was to be one of politics—prepared them to be politicians, exactly as Plato hoped that the plan of education sketched in the *Republic* would prepare his guardians. The Sophists have been called half professors, half journalists; they were half teachers and thinkers, half disseminators of things new and strange, paradoxical and astonishing, which would catch the ear. With something of the charlatan they also combined something of the philosopher. In any case it was much for the future history of Greek thought that they should have systematised subjects like rhetoric or politics into a "method," or course of instruction. Such a systematisation did two things. It helped the differentiation of subject from subject, and the division of labour in the field of knowledge. It gave the idea of a scientific handling, on the basis of its own principles, of each of the subjects treated. The Sophists who systematised their courses prepared the way for Aristotle.

The increased self-consciousness of Greek thought appears first in the mental philosophy which the Sophists, Protagoras and Gorgias taught: it appears next, by a natural extension, in new theories of the State and Society, which correspond to the

¹ Dümmler, *Prolegomena zu Platons Staat*.

² Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, i., 413, 414.

as of human origin and created for self-preservation. But the Sophists did raise such questions; and the answer they gave was that man did *not* constitute the State rightly, and that it is in need of reform. It does not answer, they felt, to the sense of self-consciousness which had appeared in Protagoras' dictum. "Measured" by man, it is found wanting. It does not satisfy his instinct for free expression and fulfilment: it represses and stifles the full play of activity which is the real principle of moral life, the *φύσις* of the human world. In this way men came to reject the State and its law as anathema. Such things do not exist by nature, but by convention; and convention is altogether wrong.¹ "Law, being a tyrant" (the Sophist Hippias is made by Plato to say in the *Protagoras*), "constrains man contrary to nature."

The antithesis of *φύσις* and *νόμος* in the mouth of these Sophists meant, that the moral content of tradition and custom and institutions was opposed to the ideal code of morality suggested by the fundamental principle of human life. This opposition, it has just been suggested, is based on the fact that the principle of life is regarded as consisting in self-assertion, while traditions and customs and institutions seem to rest on an opposite view. Another basis for this opposition has been suggested,² in the shape of a parallel between the efforts of the early physicists and their results, and these efforts of the early moralists and the conclusions to which they led. The early physicists, when they attempted to find a permanent basis underneath all the flux of the corporeal world, always attempted to discover it in a corporeal body. Even the Pythagorean "numbers" were extended in space: even the Anaxagorean *νοῦς* had substance. But if the permanent basis of the world is corporeal, and the world itself is also corporeal—if the two are thus *in pari materia*, then one of the two must be unreal. In the result, the world of actual perception was regarded as unreal: the new corporeal unity denied existence to the world of sense. The fault lay in the conception of the *φύσις* of things as corporeal: if it had been regarded as spiritual, something not outside the every-day

Meaning
nature in
sphere of
morality

¹ The distinction between *φύσις* and *νόμος* is attributed to Archelaus: he taught that "the noble and the base exist by convention, not by nature" (Ritter and Preller, 8th ed., § 218 b).

² By Professor Burnet, *Int. Journ. Eth.*, vii., 328.

and to give a definite content to the abstract conception of "Nature". The law which he postulated for the physical world ^{Might is right} may have been applied by some of the Sophists to the moral world.¹ Just as modern views of evolution, which teach the survival of the fittest, may lead some to conclude that might is right, so the Heraclitean doctrine, that "struggle and strife is at the bottom of that incessant motion which is the source and preservative of life,"² may have led to the Sophistic teaching that "justice is the interest of the stronger". This principle of strife Heraclitus called "father and king"; and he applied the principle himself to human life, saying: "Some it had proved gods, others men: some it has made slaves, others freemen". Whether Heraclitus' theory of the world influenced the Sophists or not, we have Plato's word for the view that conceptions of the physical universe underlay their conception of human life. It is a materialistic view of the world, as without God or reason, which produces the theory that "might is right".³ It would appear therefore that conceptions of the physical universe were now being used to support absolutely different political views. One thinker defended law and the institutions of democracy by analogies from Nature: on the other hand, there were Sophists who, on the strength of Heraclitus' views, or at any rate of some physical conception, attacked law and democracy, and preached the doctrine of brute strength and individual will. "Nature and natural law were on one side the chosen shibboleth of the growing love of equality; and on the other side they served the aristocrats and the worshippers of a strong personality."⁴

In various ways we have seen that individualism is the gospel to which men were tending by the end of the fifth century. We have seen that historical processes like colonisation, the growth of new rituals, and the action of legislators, tended to unsettle the old feeling of the city's stability: we have seen that the study of anthropology, by widening the circle of men's knowledge and opening their eyes to strange diversities, exerted a similar

¹ Cf. Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, i., 72, 405.

² The Common and Identical was a harmony that underlay a strife of warring opposites. Men seized on the idea of strife, and forgot that of harmony.

³ *Laws*, 889 sqq.; cf. *infra*, pp. 205-7.

⁴ Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, i., 407.

influence. We have seen that a new feeling of self-consciousness may be said to appear in the teaching of Protagoras, which emphasises human agency in thought, and which may be extended to emphasise human agency in politics and conduct. We have seen how the attempt to discover a "natural law" in the moral world leads to a conception of right as consisting in might. We may now ask—what was the political theory which this individualism produced? We have to rely almost entirely on the testimony of Plato; but, so far as we can see, the theory in vogue was that of a social contract. In this theory the individualism of the present projects itself into the past. Because men are to-day fully conscious of their individual will and its claims, they begin to ask how it came about that the men of the past, who are imagined to have been equally conscious, surrendered the free exercise of that will and the full assertion of those claims. Such a surrender, some will say, can only have been the result of a voluntary act, by which men abandoned a satisfaction limited by the weakness of individual strength for the advantages of co-operation. Here we get the conception of a voluntary contract of each with all, which Plato presents in the *Republic* by the mouth of Glaucon.¹ The State no longer seemed as ancient and as inevitable as the earth on which it stood. No longer was its origin referred to a divine act of union which man might not dissolve. It had sprung from the interested action of ordinary men. It had nothing of the inevitability of a natural order, nothing of the sanctity of a divine institution: it had only expediency to plead in self-defence. It had come to rescue men from a previous condition of Nature, in which they preyed upon one another, and were preyed upon by the beasts: it had come by convention, but the name of convention was blessed, seeing that by its power men had been rescued from a "nasty and brutish" condition.

So far, individualism does not present itself in its extreme form. It involves only two conclusions, which may be regarded as moderate—that there was an original condition of Nature, in which men lived as individuals according to their own good pleasure, and that there was afterwards an act of contract by which these individuals surrendered, in a conscious bargain, the

¹ *Republic*, ii. ; cf. *infra*, p. 99.

free exercise of their own wills in return for the protection and preservation of their lives. In this moderate form the theory of a social contract stated by Glaucon may perhaps have been a tenet of Democritus. There are several reasons for so thinking. In the first place, we know that Epicurus in later days held the theory of a social contract, and as he was in many respects a follower of Democritus, it seems natural to suppose that he was following Democritus in his political theory. Again, we know that Democritus maintained the conventional or artificial view of the origin of language; and we are told that he attributed secondary qualities like bitterness and sweetness to "convention". What he believed with regard to language and secondary qualities may well have been his belief with regard to the State.

But what was the theory of a pure and extreme individualism? A pure individualism must reject, or at any rate revolutionise, the State; and the theory which has just been stated justifies the State, even if it justifies it for individualistic reasons. It would seem that pure individualism gave the answer which we should naturally expect. Its tenet was still a social contract—but a social contract made by the weak, who instituted the State in their own interest, at the expense of the strong. In its present condition—so men argued—the State violated natural law: it was a conventional thing, utterly artificial, and so to be utterly overthrown. The genesis of such a view might be somewhat as follows. "Man is the measure of all things"; and man measures his self-satisfaction highest, and self-satisfaction is therefore his standard of action. Or again, "the natural law of the moral world is something, which tradition and custom are not": tradition and custom repress the individual, and therefore the natural law is the emancipation of the individual to a full licence of self-satisfaction. If each has thus a right to satisfy himself according to his powers (as either of these lines of thought supposes), it follows that the strongest have the greatest right, because they have the greatest power. The "natural law" is the greatest right of the greatest might. In a state of Nature this would be the rule: each would get his satisfaction as best he could, the strong man fully, the weak man feebly or not at all. But an instinct of self-defence drives

Superior
a state of
Nature

slave. The difference between a noble and a non-noble class was pronounced as artificial as the difference between freeman and slave. Euripides writes :

The honest man is Nature's nobleman ;¹

and Lycophron is said by Aristotle to have denied the reality of any distinction of birth—just as, we are told in the *Politics*, he spoke of law as merely conventional, and as simply “ a guarantor of men's rights against one another ”. But the age of enlightenment went still further. Not only did it attack the apex and the basis of Greek society, the noble and the slave, as both unnatural : it also laid hands on such institutions of every-day life as the family and private property.² The position of women is a problem that occupies Euripides. In the *Medea* he makes his heroine complain of the lot of women as compared with that of men :³ she would rather fight in battle thrice than suffer the pains of labour once. In a fragment of the *Protesilaus*⁴ he advocates community of wives. It is obvious that there was contemporary discussion with regard to the emancipation of woman ; and the Platonic solution which lies in communism, and in giving to women the same work as to men, seems to have been already anticipated. It is indeed obvious that the *Republic* is much indebted to all the seething of opinion which characterised the end of the fifth century at Athens. If Plato attempted to remodel the Greek conceptions of religion, he had Prodicus, and Diagoras, and—it may be added—the religious doubts of Protagoras, for his forerunners. If he sought to remodel society by the abolition of property and the family, he had his precursors in this field too, as we learn from Euripides. The collectivism (if it may be so called) of his politics is a natural reaction from previous individualism ; and the philosopher-king is the “ strong man ” adopted, educated and transmuted. The *Republic* did not spring at once to life, self-begotten in Plato's brain : it had its prelude and its preparation in previous

¹ Fragm. 345 (Dindorf).

² Probably comparative anthropology furnished something of a basis here : the different customs of marriage and property would be particularly striking. Aristotle in the *Politics* (Bk. II.) refers to Libyan customs of marriage, and to the practices of “ some of the barbaric tribes ” in respect of property.

³ *Medea*, 230 sqq.

⁴ Fragm. 655.

would seem to have been a conservative. It is true that he is said to have been banished from Athens for a work denying the Gods; but his work probably denied only the possibility of knowing the Gods, and if we may trust Plato's picture, he believed that, while men gathered themselves into cities for reasons of self-preservation, it was God who gave law and order to their cities. Nor would a revolutionary have been employed, as Protagoras was, to help in the founding of an Athenian colony. Like Prodicus and Protagoras, Antiphon too was a conservative, and he defended the type of democracy in which the middle class was supreme. His treatise *On Concord* had for its theme "the desire to conciliate the good-will of one's fellow-citizens"; and yet he is counted among the Sophists. The author from whom Euripides borrowed in the *Phænissæ* and the *Supplikes* was a defender of existing order and democratic government against the attacks of revolutionaries. If there were Sophists who were the friends of the enemies of the Demos, there were also Sophists (and if we include Protagoras, still greater Sophists) who were the friends of its friends. Nor indeed could the majority have been otherwise: they had to earn their daily bread.

Whatever the divergencies of view among the Sophists, they were all at one in turning from Nature to man. Protagoras and Heclogias, as we have seen, made the transition easy, the one by showing the impossibility of the old physical conceptions, the other by emphasising the part which man plays in constituting the world; and following in their steps, many Sophists had pursued the study of man in all the manifestations of his activity—in his politics, in his law, in his language. For the future, this was to be the channel in which thought would flow. That thought could not but be pre-eminently political. Man was too much tied to the State for any discussion of individual ethics: any philosophy of human action must be "political" philosophy. In the struggle of contemporary parties, again, questions would constantly arise, which called for an answer, and made political thought a vital and practical thing. The busy study of politics moved in various directions. It was partly historical; and here political thought clothed itself in historical narrations or disquisitions. It was partly ideal; and men imagined Utopias which did not seem visionary.

stitution of Athens, which we now possess, was based on this pamphlet. In it Athenian democracy was discussed in the light of its leading statesmen; and from their history it was argued that Athens would do well to substitute a moderate constitution for the extreme democracy which the Periclean age had produced. This form of constitution the author endeavoured to identify with the old "ancestral" constitution of Solonian times; and Aristotle may have been led by his arguments to entertain that preference for a moderate democracy (or Polity) which he shows in the *Politics*.¹

Alongside of histories and pamphlets recording or judging the present or the past come the attempts to sketch the lines of the future. Not only did men attempt to elicit political ideas from existing constitutions: they also tried to embody political ideas in pictures of ideal constitutions.² Such pictures were a natural result both of the tendencies of thought and of the practical needs of the hour. The attack on things conventional, and the praise of things natural, inevitably led to the suggestion of ideal States possessed of "natural" institutions. The anthropology, which had helped to produce the attacks on institutions like the family and property, now served as the basis of positive construction. The first ideal States would naturally be based on travellers' accounts of Nature-peoples; and even in Plato's *Republic* some traces of this basis may be seen. The practical problem of colonisation made these sketches less visionary than they would otherwise have been. The great age of colonisation was indeed past: the boundless field for political experiment which had been presented by the incessant foundation of new communities was by this time restricted. Yet there were still cases of colonisation, and still room for experiment. In 443 we find Protagoras acting as legislator for the Athenian colony at Thurii: at the end of his life we find Plato laying down the "Laws" for an imaginary colony.

¹ Critias, one of the Thirty Tyrants, who did Theramenes to death, was also a political writer. He is said to have written in prose and verse, treating of the inventions of various lands for the comfort of life (cf. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorf, *op. cit.*, i., 175).

² Accordingly, in the second book of the *Politics*, Aristotle inquires into the ideas of previous thinkers, like Plato and Hippodamus, as well as the characteristics of constitutions like Sparta, Crete and Carthage.

material but warm texture, served him in winter and summer alike. He was a man of learning in physics; and it accords with his somewhat pretentious temper that he should have been "the first man who was not a politician who tried to describe an ideal State". He anticipated Plato in his division of the State into three classes: he differed from Plato in that his three classes consisted of artisans, farmers and warriors, while Plato's three were formed of a single producing class, a class of warriors, and a class of philosophic rulers. Possibly there is some imitation of Egyptian castes in Hippodamus' plan: possibly, as his use of the number three suggests, he was under Pythagorean influences. As he divided the citizens into three classes, so he divided the land into three portions—one sacred, and reserved for religious purposes; one public, and assigned to the use of the warriors; a third private, and left to the farming class. That he should have made the land which supplied the needs of the soldiers public property again reminds us of Plato's scheme—though Plato pursued a different plan, and, assigning all the land to the producing class, imposed on them a tribute in kind which the soldiers and rulers consumed in common. Both in providing a special fighting class, and in making its property the property of the State, Hippodamus may be said to have aimed at instituting a reformed government, exempt from the vices of the times—a government freed from political incapacity by specialisation, and from political corruption by communism. But in one respect he did not depart from Athens. The three classes of his ideal State in conjunction formed "the people," and the people elected its rulers. Here Hippodamus differs widely from Plato, who will have nothing of the people, and proposes that the producing and fighting classes shall be governed by a class in whose appointment they have no part. The laws, like the citizens and the land, Hippodamus divided into three classes, according as they dealt with offences against honour, or property, or life; and he similarly distinguished the administration by the three subjects of its action—public matters, matters relating to resident aliens, and matters concerning foreigners. He advocated the institution of a Supreme Court of Appeal, composed of a number of the older citizens appointed by public election. Finally, he proposed rewards for men

of genders, which seemed to him irrational and in need of reform, he had attempted to change current usage. Like cookery and grammar, the sphere of human conduct had been brought under rules, and made into the subject of an "art"; but here too, the rules were to reform and not to explain, and the new standard of "self-assertion" was to sweep away as irrational the old maxims of conduct, as Protagoras' rules of grammar were to abolish the anomalies of ordinary speech. Socrates attached himself to this "art" of human conduct. He drove home hard and direct the lesson, that a man should live by known rules; and so far as this was the burden of his teaching, he was a Sophist of the Sophists. But he differed from the Sophists in not attempting to teach new canons of conduct. Far from endeavouring to preach a new rule of self-assertion, which should revolutionise old standards, he sought to elicit from the ordinary conduct of men a clear conception of the rules, by which they already acted. He wished men to analyse carefully the duties of life, and to arrive at a clear conception of their meaning: he did not wish them to bring a new conception, acquired from some other source, and remodel life by its aid. It is as if, in the sphere of grammar, he had said: "Get to know the rules by which you have all along been acting—unknowingly, and therefore imperfectly—and then you will write better Greek; but do not bring some Procrustean rule, and chop the language till it fits your scheme".

To find out clear conceptions, which could be shaped into general definitions, was thus Socrates' aim; and accordingly Aristotle speaks of him as the first to introduce general definitions. But it was for no mere intellectual purpose that he craved for definitions: it was always for a moral end. A man who had arrived at a general conception and expressed it in a definition had made explicit the rules on which he had hitherto been unconsciously and imperfectly acting; and his life would be the better for his acting by a known and explicit rule. "Virtue is knowledge," was Socrates' great maxim: he who has come to know the rules, which have always underlain his actions, will be a better man for his knowledge. With this moral aim before him, Socrates lived the life not of a philosopher, but of a prophet, in the old Hebrew sense of the word. He was a teacher; but he

fluence. Heraclitus had said, "I have researched into myself": what Socrates said to every man was "Research—research into yourself: know what is the purpose, the general conception, which underlies all your actions". Whatever the art at which a man worked, let him know, and know yet again, and always know, his art and its meaning. Borrowing one of Oliver Cromwell's fine phrases, we may say, that Socrates loved a plain russet-coated Athenian, who knew what he worked at, and loved what he knew. Now men *do* know their professions, partly because they dare not do otherwise, for a bungler's job finds no market, partly because they insensibly contract a zeal for the subject with which they have identified themselves, and push forward in its study in the strength of that zeal. To work at a profession truly and wisely is much; but it is a little thing in comparison with true work in the conduct of moral life, or wise action in the guidance of the State. Yet paradoxically enough, Socrates felt, men are content to conduct their lives in ignorance, and to leave the guidance of political affairs with men who know nothing of "political art". Accordingly he made it his effort to banish this paradox, and to induce men to make of moral or political life a "profession" in the noblest sense of that word.¹ Why should not the moral action of the individual and the political guidance of the State, be regarded as arts, for which a man needs preparation, thought, and wisdom? The grave duty of acting wisely, by known and realised rules, Socrates proved by the simplest examples. The analogy of the steersman readily occurred. Could a pilot attain excellence or virtue² as a pilot, if he knew not the Pole Star from Venus, if he was ignorant of the currents, if he did not know his ship, or how she would answer the helm? And must not a man in conducting his own life, if he was to attain virtue or excellence as a man, know the Pole Star of his life, the gusts and eddies of his passions? Must he not know

Scientific
thinking

¹ The Secretary for War has bidden us to regard the army as a nationalised industry, and to apply to its guidance the energy, the calculations, the spirit which we should bring to a private concern. This is purely Socratic. Socrates is the apostle of scientific thinking. "Put the State on the lines of a business, and your conduct on the lines of a craft; and before you do either, be sure that you know your business and your craft."

² It is important to notice that the Greek word for excellence and virtue is one and the same—*ἀρετή*. This has an important bearing on Socrates' thought.

"himself," and how far he would answer to guidance? All, must not the steersmen of the ship of State, the *gubernantes reipublicæ*, make some study of their subject, in order to obtain political virtue? Must they not have some inkling of the "dim port" to which they should steer, and of the application of pleasures and pains, punishments and rewards, which would enable them to steer their vessel and its crew into the haven?

The analogy is to some extent false. Life must be lived by faith rather than by knowledge: politics often demand instinct rather than scientific wisdom from the politician, and in any case he can only guide whithersoever his subjects have the will to follow. But the analogy lies at the root of Socrates' ethical and political teaching none the less. In his conception of ethics the need of living by rule found expression, as we have seen, in a saying which seems almost a paradox—virtue is knowledge. One may say "this is only a formal answer: what is the matter of the knowledge?" So far as Socrates gave any answer, it was this—that the knowledge which constituted virtue was knowledge of what was useful or pleasant.¹ Providence had so arranged its plan—the order of the world was so established—that man by knowing his utility found his excellence. The answer is open to an obvious criticism. Life does not show this unity between virtue and utility. "The good which I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practice." Knowledge will not deliver us out of the body of this death. Nor again did Socrates explain what utility he meant. Was it a private utility, or was it the utility of all? As Pfeiderer says—"He never answered in words; but he served others till his death." In truth, however, it is not any teaching of utilitarianism, whether applied to the individual, or to the greatest number, that is of importance here. Such teaching is secondary—we may almost say accidental.² The essential thing is the demand for knowledge, not the definition of the object known. Apply the

¹ Here again we must remember that in Greek τὸ εὖ πράττειν means both to "do well" (virtue) and to "do well by yourself" (happiness). But this is not the root of the matter. Socrates identified virtue with happiness, because for him true happiness lay in virtue. Because it was true for him, he simply assumed as an axiom what Plato has to prove strenuously by argument in the *Republic* (Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, ii., 69-73).

² But in the hands of the minor Socratics, especially the Cyrenaics, it becomes of great importance.

demand to politics, and it issues ultimately in that advocacy of an aristocracy of intelligence, which is the basis and staple of most of Plato's political thought. Hence Socrates objected to the filling of offices by lot, because it left room for the rule of ignorance. You shall know the true ruler when he comes, so he taught, neither by lot nor by vote, but by the fact that he knows how to rule. In the same spirit he objected to the rule of a sovereign assembly, where tinker and tailor, cobbler and fuller, sat together, and ruled Athens, and yet had never given a single thought to the meaning of politics. The anti-democratic trend of his teaching is obvious; and it proves the Athenian democracy not to have been altogether mistaken in its dislike of Socrates. It is true that he preached the unselfish rule of the wise; but when men like Alcibiades and Critias came forth from his preaching, it was the despotism of an emancipated oligarchy which the people feared, and, under Critias, experienced. No wonder that he was accused of corrupting a youth, which had rather corrupted his teaching, or that Æschines could say, years after his death, that Socrates the Sophist was put to death because Critias had been educated by him. He might well seem to be the hierophant of an aristocratic coterie; and the parallel might readily occur of Pythagoras and that aristocratic club which, having found its *raison d'être* in his teaching, had interfered in politics against the side of the people. Yet the suspicion is fundamentally unjust. Kings were to Socrates shepherds of their people, chosen, not in order that they might be good stewards of their own interests, but that the welfare of their subjects might prosper in their hands. This is the conception inherited by Plato, and enforced in the *Republic*. Politics is an art; the statesman is an artist; and since he who practises an art must be wise in his art, and pursue it whole-heartedly for its own sake, so must the statesman be skilled in political art, and practise it for its own sake and the betterment of his subjects.

Aristocratic
tendency of
Socrates'
politics

In the Athenian democracy such teaching could not but appear new and radical, whatever its nobility. Yet in many respects Socrates was a loyal son of Athens. He had served in its army: he had been a member of the Council, even though he must have passed to his membership through the avenue of the

tendencies he was ultimately the enemy of its stability, however loyal he may have been in practice and even in his immediate preaching. Socrates the Conservative would ultimately prove the parent of Radicalism ; and to that extent he *was* " a corrupter of youth ". To defend the State's laws and institutions on the ground of their utility to the individual is ultimately to lay them open to being rejected or at any rate reformed on the ground of inutility. It is good to stimulate men to think in order that they may see the *raison d'être* and the meaning of existing order ; yet a stirring and active thought is an uneasy thing, before whose questions ancient order may be dumb and perplexed, and a traditional temper of action may crumble and disappear. Even in Socrates himself such questionings had already appeared. He had criticised the lot : he had spoken with scant respect of the assembly. Nor was he only the enemy of democracy ; was he not in truth the enemy, unconsciously, unwillingly, of the city-state ? The outburst of philosophic thought which flowed from him was too broad for its bonds. Reason is a universal, not a civic principle. The Cynics were descended from Socrates ; and the Cynics were cosmopolitans, who found their own reason sufficient for their needs, and, craving no city, took the world to be their home.

The greatest lesson of Socrates' life, we may almost say, was his death. He taught thereby (and Plato has elicited the lesson for us in the *Apology* and the *Crito*), that for conscience' sake a man may rise up against Cæsar, but that, in all other matters, he must render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, even to the debt of his life. Of positive principles of political philosophy his life bequeathed but little. He had not analysed the basis of the State, except in so far as he had made it rest on individual utility : he had not built any superstructure of theory, except in so far as he had attempted some slight classification of States.¹ But he had taught one great lesson—that politics were a matter of thought, and government a concern of the wise. It is a lesson eternally true—as true in democracies as in aristocracies. In it are involved the two great principles of government, that those must rule who have prepared themselves for their work, and won knowledge of their

¹ Cf. *infra*, p. 174.

environment. They stated the half of the truth which was neglected: they omitted its complementary truth which had little need to be stated.

§ 5. The future progress of Greek political thought was to follow the lines laid down by Socrates. Plato is thoroughly his disciple: Aristotle builds on Plato's foundations. But before we turn to Plato, we must first consider the teaching in matters political of minor followers of Socrates, some of whom carried his teaching to conclusions very different from those which Plato drew. In Xenophon, indeed, the master found a loyal exponent of his doctrines, who extended the gospel of capacity to such matters as horsemanship, generalship, and domestic economy. Like Plato, Xenophon was biassed against the Athenian democracy for its lack of capacity: unlike Plato, he sought a remedy not in a new and ideal government, but in making Athens conform to an existing type of government, nominally Persian, but in reality Spartan. This type Xenophon sketched in the *Cyropædia*, an historical novel, in which the career of Cyrus is made the vehicle for the exposition of Socratic ideas. The State, we are here told, must be like an army, if it is to be as efficient as an army: there must be a proper system of grades, and a thorough division of labour. Over all things the wise man must rule, and under him each must do the thing which he knows. The *Cyropædia* enunciates many ideas which appear again in Plato and Aristotle. Laws must not merely aim at preventing crime: education must not be left to mere private enterprise. It was not so in Ancient Persia. There law was positive and creative: it gave the citizens a spirit of righteousness, so that they had no inclination to commit an evil or dishonourable deed. There education was given by the State, and lasted all life long. "The Persian boys went to school to learn justice, as ours go to learn reading, writing and arithmetic"; and the mentors whom the State appointed for their training were the older citizens, who had gone through their own course with honour. Somewhat in the same way as Plato does in the *Republic*, Xenophon sketches the four stages of the life-long education of the Persians in moral and military excellence; and then he shows how in such an environment was developed the ideal ruler Cyrus—a man who was wiser and

Xenophon's
Cyropædia

better than any of his people, and made his people wiser and better than they had ever been before. Thus in Xenophon the old Greek idea of the State as a moral association is developed in the light of Socratic ideas; and the result is the conception of an education in moral wisdom given by the State, and of the rule of an ideally wise man produced by that education. These are also the Platonic conclusions; and indeed the *Republic* may be termed a *Cyropædia* without the historical setting of Xenophon, a *Cyropædia* informed instead by a deep philosophy of man and of the world.¹

As we turn from Xenophon to the Cynics and Cyrenaics, who also sprang from Socrates' teaching, we enter upon an absolutely different line of thought. If Xenophon had entertained and expanded the old Greek idea of the State, the schools which go by these names abandoned it altogether. In them we see the heirs of that cosmopolitan tendency which appears even in Socrates. The Cynics² based their position partly on the life, partly on the teaching of Socrates. If Socrates had gone barefoot, and had talked with every man, high or low, so did the Cynics. If Socrates had taught that a man should know himself, and act according to his knowledge, the Cynics pushed his teaching further, and taught that the wise man, who had attained knowledge, was sufficient unto himself. Following and exaggerating the life of Socrates, they developed into mendicant beggars, something after the pattern of the early Franciscans, but with this great difference, that they embraced poverty not because they loved the kingdom of heaven, but because they hated the

¹ For the *Cyropædia*, cf. Henkel, *Studien*, p. 136 sqq. Xenophon also wrote a dialogue called *Hiero* (apparently commending a dictator somewhat after the positivist pattern), and two treatises, one on the Lacedæmonian constitution, and one on the Revenues of Athens, advocating the nationalisation of the merchant-shipping, and of inns and lodging-houses (cf. Gomperz, ii., 134-35). Like Xenophon, Isocrates had apparently come under the influence of Socrates (cf. Henkel, p. 147 sqq.), but there is little trace of Socratic influence in his speeches. He starts from Xenophon's ideas that law is positive, and education is moral; and he finds his ideal in Solonian Athens, and the instrument of its realisation in the *Areopagus*. He appears indeed as an enemy of the lot; but he objects to it on the ground that it contradicts a true conception of equality, and not on the ground that it is inimical to the rule of wisdom. A true conception of equality is one which gives to each his desert; and the use of the lot disregards all considerations of merit.

² Cf. McCunn, *Intern. Journ. Eth.*, xiv., 185 sqq.

kingdoms of the earth. Socrates had criticised some of the institutions of democracy: they revolted against the whole of society, with all its grades and its institutions. They became "equalitarians," if one may use the word—the enemies of property, family, city, and whatever else involved degree, priority or place. One man was as good as another, and one place was as good as another: "Why should I be proud of belonging to the soil of Attica with the worms and slugs?" Denationalised by this spirit of revolt—"professing no city, or home, or country," they fortified themselves in their *incivisme* by their interpretation of Socrates' teaching. "Virtue is knowledge": it is an inward thing, and only an inward thing. External things are not manifestations of virtue: they are of the nature of hindrances. A man must leave all things and follow virtue: she alone is free. "External institutions are obstructions: all social interests are distractions." "He taught me," said Diogenes, speaking of Antisthenes, the founder of the school, "that the only thing that was mine was the free exercise of my own thoughts." The wise man, self-poised in his own *αὐτάρκεια*, thus became their ideal: the Cynic was sufficient to himself, and independent of everything outside himself.¹ To him all things were indifferent; and the State was a meaningless thing. If he acknowledged any citizenship, it was citizenship of the world; and that was no citizenship. Hence, it was said by Plutarch, "Alexander realised the Cynic ideal on its political side by the foundation of his universal empire".²

Thus was the city-state sapped, both by the equalitarian assertion, that every man is as good as every other man, whatever his political status, and by the cosmopolitan conception of the wise man sufficient for himself, and in need of no State to train him in ways of righteousness. The rational will of the individual superseded the moral association of citizens as the seat and home of virtue. We seem close to Christianity and the Church Universal; and indeed a continuous line of thought can

¹ Some idea of *αὐτάρκεια* we noticed in the Sophist Hippias, who sought to know all things and to make all things for himself. Heraclitus' "Common" brings us close to the conception of a world-state; and Prodicus in the *Protagoras* is made to regard all men as "by nature" fellow-citizens.

² Gomperz, ii., 161. There is a Cynic element in Plato's asceticism: *infra*, pp. 149-50.

be traced from Cynics to Stoics, from Stoics to the early fathers—a line of thought along which the conception of the independence of the individual soul goes together with that of a world-association of souls. The idea of a world-association was certainly present to the Cynics. A number of political treatises are assigned to their founder Antisthenes: he is said to have written *Concerning Law or the State*; and two treatises, a *Maxenrus*, or *Concerning Rule*, and a *Cyrus*, or *Concerning Monarchy*, are also ascribed to his pen. Apparently he held that the wise man would not live in a State according to its enacted laws, but would live by the law of virtue, which is universal; while he believed that the nearer man approached to “the nature of animals” (a subject on which he also wrote), the better it would be for human life. We shall find Plato borrowing analogies from animal life in the *Republic*; and the Stoics often compare human associations to herds or flocks. As it is used by Antisthenes, the parallel of animal life serves to point the cry—Back to Nature: abandon cities, laws, and artificial institutions for all that is simple and primitive. It is the cry of the Radical Sophists: it is the cry of Rousseau in his youth. When we come to Diogenes, the greatest of the Cynics, we find a greater moderation, and a different atmosphere. In his *Republic* (if the accounts of its views which have been preserved are not coloured by Platonic reminiscences), he taught that the only right State was that of the world (τὴν ἐν κόσμῳ). He advocated communism of wives and children: he mocked at the illusions of noble birth and slavery. Advocating the destruction of the family, he must also (though we are not told that he did) have advocated the abolition of private property. But on the other hand he believed in the necessity of law, and he held that law was of no avail without a State. It would seem as if here we were confronted with the idea of a world-state, with a world-law (like the Roman *jus naturæ*)—a world-state in which all were equal, bond and free, Greek and barbarian,¹ and which must have been governed, because it was so wide and universal, by a single autocratic head. When we remember that Diogenes was

¹ Antisthenes was a Thracian: Diogenes came from Sinope. This perhaps suggests one reason of the attack on the Greek city; and it explains the Cynic teaching *omnes homines natura æquales sunt*.

contemporary of Aristotle (dying the year before him) we do not but feel that in his teaching (if it is correctly recorded) there is more of a sympathy for the contemporary movement of ideas than we find in the pages of Aristotle. While the city-layers lay dying, and while Aristotle busied himself with medicines and dietaries, Diogenes lifted up his voice, and cried—the King is dead: long live the new King of the world.

At the beginning of the *Politics* we find something of an attack on the Cynics: the man who thinks he can exist without law is either a beast or a God. In truth the Cynics figured romantically as either—sometimes as Gods, creatures of pure reason, untroubled by passion, sufficing to themselves; sometimes as beasts, in the squalor and indecency into which they threw themselves in order to point their protest against the conventional character of all clean living and decency. But when Aristotle attacks the Cynics, he borrows from their ideas. A watchword too is *αὐτάρκεια*—self-sufficingness—exactly as the Cynics had been. But the Cynics had believed in *αὐτάρκεια* of an isolated and minimised self: Aristotle believed in that of a social and intensified individuality. Man is sufficient to himself, in Aristotle's eyes, when he is citizen. On the other hand, it is in order to attain self-sufficiency that man identifies himself out into a citizen. In Plato, as in Aristotle, the influence of the Cynic is not absent. The community of men and wives is a Cynic tenet; and there are many points of contact between the Cynic ideal and the “city of Swine” described in the Second Book of the *Republic*, even if there is no allusion to the Cynics, and Plato does not intend to satirise, or to logise, their views.

The Cynics made individualism the centre of their system: The Cyrenaics believed that the individual was sufficient of himself to discharge his own duty. The Cyrenaic School, equally descended from Socrates, pursued the same individualistic direction. He who knew, as Socrates had bidden men know, was sufficient in himself for his own salvation; but his salvation lay, according to their tenets, in the pursuit of pleasure.¹ Finding the

Or perhaps one may say that the Cyrenaics followed the utilitarianism of Epicurus, while the Cynics followed his intellectualism. But the antithesis is perhaps misleading; intellectualism also characterised the Cyrenaics.

standard of life in the cult of a wise pleasure, the Cyrenaics no longer needed the State to supply any rule of action. Philosophy was good, Aristippus is reported to have said, "to enable the philosopher, supposing all laws were abolished, to go on living as before". Thus the Socratic justification of law as useful, and thereby pleasurable, came ultimately to undo the law which it had served to justify. Because utility was the basis of law, it might serve in lieu of the law. Law was a mere convention, said the Cyrenaics: right and wrong existed by custom and enactment, not by nature. Yet they did not abolish the law to make room for a private pleasure which was its enemy. On the contrary, they conceived that a man might find pleasure in the welfare of his friend or of his country. "The prosperity of our country, equally with our own, is of itself enough to give us joy." The Hedonism of an individual enjoyment thus rose into the Utilitarianism of a general welfare. But the general welfare, in the ordinary Cyrenaic view, was the welfare not of the πόλις but of the Cosmopolis. It is with the lover of pleasure as it is with the zealot for duty. Both regard the individual as sufficient, whether to measure his own pleasure, or to discern his own duty. Both regard a wise indifference to externals as necessary for the attainment of the desired end. If a man gives to fortune the hostages of a living interest in anything save the end of life, he may fail to attain it. Both, therefore, deny to the individual an interest in any civic unit; and both leave man with the negative residuum of an interest in the world, and the world alone. A full and active life which realised all possibilities was to Aristotle the result of life in the city: along with citizenship of the world-state went the idea of the calm of a solitude (ἀπάθεια or ἀταραξία), in which there was none of the struggle and strife, and none of the vigour and life, of the πόλις. Such a temper may partly have prepared the decay of the city and the coming of "Alexandrinism": on the other hand, it is also its expression and its result.

CHAPTER II

PLATO AND THE PLATONIC DIALOGUE: THE DEFENCE OF SOCRATES

THE LIFE OF PLATO

§ 1. **P**LATO was born about the year 428 B.C. By birth he belonged to a distinguished Athenian family. On his mother's side he could trace his pedigree as far back as Solon, the great law-giver of Athens; and among the men of his own generation he counted as connections two of some note—Critias, who was prominent among the members of the oligarchical clique which ruled for a time in 404, and Antiphon, who had been one of the leaders in the revolution which temporarily subverted Athenian democracy in 411. Belonging to a family of anti-democratic tendencies, he naturally became a member, somewhere about 407, of the circle which had gathered round Socrates. Here too democracy was out of favour. The Socratic principle, that life was an art, and that the proper conduct of life depended on knowledge, found, as we have seen, its political application. Politics was treated as an art: the proper conduct of political affairs was shown to depend on knowledge—a knowledge which neither the democratic assembly itself, nor the officials whom it appointed by the chance of the lot, could be said to possess. The aristocratic prejudices which Plato inherited would here receive a philosophical justification; at the same time they would be modified, in so far as the right of numbers was rejected by Socrates, not in favour of birth, but in favour of wisdom. When democracy took its revenge upon Socrates in 399, and Athens executed her greatest son, Plato might well feel his anti-democratic feelings completely justified. Henceforth he made it his work to defend

Plato and
Socrates

mere philosopher; the same is true of Plato. Both master and disciple are prophets and preachers, rather than philosophers—rumpets to summon a wayward people to righteousness, rather than still small voices of solitude. The *Republic* is as much meant to prove, and as earnest in proving, that the eternal laws of morality cannot be shaken by the sceptic, as are the writings of the Hebrew prophets to show that God's arm is not shortened by the disbelief of His people. In life, as well as in thought, Plato showed the same practical bent. Not only did he, like Socrates, gather a circle round him, and publicly teach his views in the *Academy*,¹ but he is also said to have attempted to carry his philosophy into active life (as, according to the *Republic*, every philosopher should), and to have twice visited Sicily with that end in view. On an early visit in 387, we are told, he came into contact with Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, and expounded to him so vividly arguments similar to those of the *Republic* (the composition of which may have been already begun), that Dionysius, annoyed by his denunciation of injustice and condemnation of tyranny, caused him to be sold into slavery. But Plato did not leave Syracuse without having deeply influenced the mind of Dion, the brother of Dionysius' wife; and on the death of Dionysius, and the accession of his son, Dionysius the younger, Dion endeavoured to permeate the mind of his nephew with Platonic ideas. The State of the *Republic* might seem likely to be realised in Syracuse, if Dionysius could once be made philosopher-king instead of tyrant; and Dion invited, and induced his nephew to concur in inviting, the master himself, now long released from his slavery, to visit Syracuse once more. Plato came not only once, but twice (368 and 361); but he failed to make Dionysius a philosopher (having apparently required that he should undergo the severe training sketched in the *Republic*), and only succeeded in bringing about the expulsion of Dion from Syracuse. If all these things happened as they are narrated in Plutarch and the (so-called) letters of Plato, the issue may well have convinced Plato that the *Republic* (which he had written, perhaps,

¹ A gymnasium about three-quarters of a mile from Athens. Gymnasias covered a wide area, and contained open spaces like a modern park. Around the open running-ground were porticoes, furnished with seats, in which philosophers or rhetoricians might discourse.

between 387 and 368, and attempted to realise between 368 and 361) was indeed a pattern laid up in heaven, but hardly to be copied on earth. Disillusionised, it may be, he retired for a time upon the problems of abstract thought discussed in dialogues like the *Sophist*. But the old practical bent was not extinguished: in extreme old age, in a spirit of kindly tolerance and half-humorous sadness (as when he speaks of men as "merely playthings for the gods"), he wrote the *Laws*. In this dialogue (which is almost entirely a monologue, and shows something of the garrulity of age), he sketches the idea, destined to a long history in Greek speculation, of a mixed constitution, and while still adhering firmly to the ideal of the *Republic*, attempts to construct a State on a lower but more attainable level. And so he died, about 347, at the age of eighty-one, still occupied in the service of man, still hoping for new things to come, still striving his best to aid their coming.

THE METHOD OF PLATO

the use of the
dialogue

§ 2. The memory of Socrates seems to live in everything which Plato wrote. Until we come to the *Laws*, there is not a Platonic dialogue in which Socrates is not a character, and indeed a protagonist. Not only so, but the thought of the dialogues, wherever politics and ethics are in question, is Socratic in its principles; and the very form of dialogue which Plato chose for the expression of his philosophy may seem in itself a reminiscence of the Socratic circle. At any rate the purpose, which leads Plato to prefer that form, is the purpose which animated Socrates. Socrates had never attempted to instil knowledge: on the contrary, he had always disclaimed its possession. He desired to awaken thought. He was the gadfly who stung men into a sense of truth; he gave the shock of the torpedo-fish; he practised the art of midwifery, and brought thought to birth. He appealed to what was in man's own mind, and trusted it to respond to the appeal: he called to the moral sense of man, believing that it would reply to the call. And so it was with Plato. He desired to show thought at work, and to avoid the mere exposition of its finished product. He was a lecturer and a teacher as well as a writer; and when he set pen to paper, he would naturally fall into the vein of writing which discussions with his class in the Academy suggested.

Like every genuine teacher, he wished to make men think by his teaching; and, as a writer, he felt that thought would best be awakened in his readers, if they were made to follow the process of the author's own mind. A subject is discussed inside the individual mind in much the same way as it is disputed in a circle of talkers. One view is set up only to be demolished by another, until some final residuum of truth is attained. "One brewed thought devours another," as Hegel said; and finally truth alone remains on the field as a victor. The dialogue is his process of the individual mind made concrete, with its stages translated into persons. It is a higher, and more artistic expression of the same tendency, which appears even in the concise lecture-notes of Aristotle.

Dealing with moral problems, Plato naturally started from the *prima facie* views of ordinary opinion.¹ Some character, who with dramatic truth is presented as being in himself, and by his temper and experience, the natural embodiment of one of these views, appears on the stage and gives it utterance. Often such a *prima facie* view will represent one of those lurking principles, which we do not allow to show themselves in our words or in our actions (as we fancy), but to which none the less we pay an unspoken but ready allegiance. "After all—if I dared think it out, which I must not—pleasure is everything": or "after all—if things were as they ought to be, which they are not—I *ought* to have what I am strong enough to get". Brought to the light, and pushed to their conclusions, these lurking principles are shown to involve results which their holder cannot accept: when they *are* thought out, they are impossible. And in their place are installed those principles of moral life, to which we pay a spoken but reluctant homage, while nevertheless they are shown to command the assent of our whole being, when they are put before us in their full meaning and bearing. Seen in this light, each of the Platonic dialogues is an education of men, away from the false if cherished views of the "first glance," back again, but on a higher level, to the faith by which they act. But it is not always that popular opinion is presented only to be rejected. Opinion is more than a mere inclination to

¹ Cf. *infra*, p. 94 *sqq.*

error. By a right instinct it also reaches the truth, though it does not really see the truth which it reaches. A popular opinion may serve as a basis of inquiry, and by gradual stages be developed and refined, until it is made into a perception of the genuine truth. It is a true opinion, and worthy of consideration, that the character of a State is determined by the character of its citizens; and from this opinion the *Republic* (after correcting the false opinion that might is right) ultimately takes its start. But the opinion is extended far and wide. Brought into contact with philosophic principles, it is developed and deepened until there results a division of the State corresponding to a division of the human soul which is one of the preconceived principles of Plato's philosophy.

use of analogy

A particular feature of Plato's method is his use of analogy. We have already seen that the use of analogies from *Nature* marked the first steps from the old Nature-philosophy to the philosophy of man, as when, for instance, the rotation of office in a democracy was justified by the annual revolution of the sun. Analogies from the *arts* were frequent in the method of Socrates: he was perpetually enforcing the need of knowledge and of education by the example of the pilot or the doctor. In Plato analogies of both kinds are frequent. His analogies from Nature are chiefly analogies drawn from the animal world. In the *Republic* the analogy of the dog is more than once made the basis of important arguments. By considering the temper of the watch-dog, Plato arrives at the principle which should dictate the choice of guardians; by a comparison of the male watch-dog with the female, he is able to decide that women ought to be guardians as well as men; and it is by an argument from the breeding of animals that he comes upon his peculiar theory of marriage. The same use of analogies from Nature characterises at least one passage in the *Politics* of Aristotle. It is from the analogy of Nature, and of the relation of animals to men, that Aristotle attempts to justify slavery as a natural institution, and to prove the propriety of the slave's relation to his master.

But it is the Socratic use of analogies drawn from the arts which appears most prominently in Plato. The conception of politics as an art, on which the Sophists had acted when

they had professed to make politics, like medicine, a subject of teaching, and which Socrates had made into the basis of his demand for knowledge, penetrates almost everything which Plato has to say on this subject. Conceiving politics as an art, he demanded that in this art, as in others, there should be knowledge. This is perhaps the most prominent feature in the whole of his political thought; and the demand that, on the analogy of all other "artists," the statesman should know what he practised, lies at the root of the Republic. The same conception of politics led Plato still further. Because every artist ought to be unfettered in the practice of his art by any body of rules, he believes that the statesman should ideally be free from the restraint of law; and he advocates in consequence a theory of absolute monarchy. Finally, in the strength of this conception he can prove that every ruler is set to rule *propter commune bonum*; since every artist must necessarily work, if he be a true artist, for the betterment of his art's object.

The use of analogy is difficult, and false analogies are easy. ^{Dangers of analogy} It can hardly be denied that Plato did not always surmount the difficulty, or that he sometimes fell into pitfalls. The analogies from the animal world which he employs can hardly be accepted: the continuation of the human species cannot be regulated by the same considerations which regulate the breeding of animals. A whole world of spiritual motives enters into the one, which is not present in the other; and the whole analogy breaks down for want of recognition of this fact. Nor is the use of analogies drawn from the arts free from criticism. The politician, after all, is not as the physician; and if the one should do his work without the shackles of a text-book, it does not follow that the other should act without the regulation of law. The treatment of the soul involves other considerations than those which guide the treatment of the body, and in many respects, as for instance in his theory of punishment, Plato is not sufficiently alive to their presence. But while we condemn the treatment of political questions according to analogies drawn from physical arts, we must not forget the cardinal position of Plato. Politics is not *like* the arts: it is an art. There is identity rather than analogy. Yet criticism is still possible. Politics, if an art itself, must not be simply conformed to the likeness of arts other than itself.

Of the analogy between man and the State which plays such a large part in the *Republic* much the same may be said. Here again there is identity rather than analogy. The virtues of the State are not *like* those of man: the virtues of the State *are* the virtues of the men of whom it is composed. Yet the criticism is possible, and perhaps just, that in the end Plato conforms the State too much to the image of a single man; for though its virtues are the virtues of its component members, it does not follow that its classes must correspond, as by Plato they are made to correspond, to the psychological divisions of its members' minds.

THE LESSER DIALOGUES OF PLATO

§ 3. The three great dialogues of Plato which deal with problems of political thought are the *Republic*, the *Politics*, and the *Laws*. But there are few dialogues into which some question which touches politics does not enter. The *Apology* and the *Crito*, in dealing with the life and death of Socrates, raise problems of the relation of the State to the individual. The *Meno*, in discussing knowledge and instruction, necessarily discusses the nature of political knowledge and the possibility of instruction in politics. A similar problem is treated in the *Protagoras*, and the *Gorgias* contains a discussion of the questions raised by the teaching of the Sophists, a teaching which, as we have seen, was almost entirely political in character and intention. Finally, in the *Critias*, Plato begins, but never finishes, a political novel describing the state of the *Republic* in action.

the *Apology*:
defence of
Socrates

The *Apology* is an attempt to justify Socrates. Suspected by the democrats of being the head of an aristocratic coterie, he had been accused of corrupting the youth, and of disbelieving in the gods of the State. There was a certain truth in this accusation. Feeling the evil of an ignorance which pretended to be knowledge, Socrates had made himself into a missionary for the destruction of shams; and (since what he conceived to be shams were of the essence of the Athenian constitution) he had unsettled the tone and temper of the State in which he lived. The problem which confronted him at his trial was the problem of Antigone, when Creon had issued his edict against the burial of her brother Polynices. Should obedience be paid to the will of the State, or to the sense of justice with which it

flicted? Should Athens be left in her ignorance, because law would be obeyed by conformity to the wishes and will of her citizens, or should Socrates satisfy his sense of what was right by open warning and denunciation? It is the question which has always confronted the martyr; and in the spirit of a martyr Socrates gives his answer. "This is the command of the law. Acquit me or condemn me: I shall never alter my position." ¹ In the name of something higher than the law of the State, he defies the law, as men have done in all ages. But this is only one side of the matter; and another and complementary side is presented in the *Crito*.² In this dialogue Plato ^{The *Crito*: explanation of obedience} proposes that Socrates is tempted by Crito to escape from the prison, in which he lies, condemned to death for the answer he has given. If he escapes, he will again disobey the law, which has commanded him to abide in prison until death, and to die there for his first disobedience. Shall he twice sin against the law?

If he had been forced to defy it once for conscience' sake, ¹ he will not defy it again for life's sake. He has already done a serious thing; he has gone about to overturn the law. He must now by his obedience recognise its claims, and as far as in him lies, he will help to establish its sanctity. In teaching this lesson, Plato imagines a dialogue between the Laws of Athens and Socrates. "So you imagine," the Laws inquire of Socrates, "that a State can subsist in which the decisions of the law must yield to the will of individuals?" "But the decision of the law in any case was unjust." "But the law has none the less a double claim on your obedience." And then Plato expounds the nature of this double claim. In the first place, the law, regulating as it does marriage and the nourishing and education of children (and Socrates admits that he has no objection to urge against this notion of law), is in a real sense the parent of every citizen. By the law the citizen is legitimately born into his citizenship; by law he is educated into the capacity to use his citizenship. By the law he is what he is; and as a child owes obedience to his parents, so, and for the same reason, a citizen owes obedi-

¹ *Apology*, 30 A-C.

² The *Crito* is dated as one of Plato's later works by Gomperz, *Greek Philosophers*, iii., 57, and is regarded as Plato's defence of himself from the charge of revolutionary aims, to which the character of the *Republic* might have given rise.

bating society without incurring obligations of subscription and of orderly behaviour, which are the correlatives of his right to make, or to hear, a speech. The fact that he does not resign his membership is a standing proof of his acknowledgment of those obligations. This is Plato's contention; and thus the gist of the *Apology* and *Crito* comes to this: "Obey the law, and obey it cheerfully, where a material interest is at stake: otherwise you are a disobedient son and a faithless partner. Disobey it only, and disobey it even then in anguish, when a supreme spiritual question is at issue." It is the exact opposite of Hobbes' view, that a man should submit in matters of conscience, and only revolt to save his life.

Socrates was a martyr to the cause of knowledge. He had died because he would persist in stinging, "like a gad-fly," until men would recognise their ignorance, and seek after instruction. But are the things and the pursuits of which he demanded knowledge such, that knowledge of them can be got by the way of instruction? The justification of Socrates demands an answer to this question; and in the *Meno* and the *Protagoras* an answer is attempted. Both these dialogues deal with the question—"Is virtue a thing incapable of being communicated or imparted by one man to another?" At the end of the *Meno*¹ political virtue, or the quality of a good statesman, comes under discussion; and Plato admits that experience shows that good statesmen do not transmit their qualities to their sons or successors. Yet they certainly would, if they could; and it would therefore seem that Socrates was preaching the impossible, and that no instruction can make a good statesman. In reality it is not so. The reason why good statesmen cannot transmit a knowledge of statesmanship, is not that it is not transmissible, but that they have no knowledge to transmit. Instead of a reasoned knowledge, connected by a principle, in the light of which it is lucid and teachable, they have only an instinctive tact, a sort of *flair* by which they can travel along the right path, though their eyes are holden from knowledge of the truth. Such an instinctive "right opinion" (*ὁρθὴ δόξα*), "which is in

Virtue is knowledge, and therefore teachable

¹ The *Meno*

¹ The *Meno* is here discussed first; but in order of time it is placed by Gomperz (ii., 375) "later, not only than the *Protagoras*, but also than the *Gorgias*". It has been treated first here, as containing the greatest justification of instinct which Plato permitted himself, and as therefore logically furthest removed from the *Republic*.

sense Protagoras regards as not, like specific arts, the quality of special individuals, but the common endowment of all mankind. This conviction he states in an apologue, which seems to represent the view which he taught of the origin of the State. He believes in a primitive state of Nature, and in the religious origin of political association. In the state of Nature, men, while possessed of the arts of life, were destitute of political art, and though they had religion and language, they were almost destroyed by the beasts for want of the strength of political association.¹ Desire for self-preservation drew them into cities: they contracted, as it were, one with another; but still destitute of political art, they destroyed their own associations by internal dissension, until Zeus came to the rescue, and "sent Hermes to them, bearing reverence and justice to be the ordering principles of cities and the bonds of friendship and conciliation".² But while the arts had each been the property of a favoured few, Zeus gave the "political art" of justice to all, since all must share therein, if the cities of men were to exist and prosper. And therefore it is that Athenians listen to tinker and tailor in affairs of State.

A deep truth is stated in this apologue. Mere aggregations of men do not form a State: a contract issuing in an artificial unity maintained by artificial laws would be no sooner formed than broken. What is needed and what is everything, is the life-breath from on high—a common mind to pursue a common purpose of good life. Only in virtue of such a life-breath is a State real and vital: without it, it is but a Frankenstein doomed to destruction. As Protagoras continues his argument, he hits intuitively on further truths. Punishment, he tells his audience, is proof positive that this virtue or political art, which is the life-breath of the State, can be transmitted and taught; for punishment is not the "unreasonable fury of a beast,"³ or a retaliation for past wrong; it is administered with regard to the future, and to deter the criminal from doing wrong again.⁴

¹ Plato again speaks of early man as almost destroyed by the beasts, *Politicus*, 274 B.

² *Protagoras*, 322 C. ³ *Ibid.*, 324 B.

⁴ For Plato's theory of punishment, cf. *infra*, p. 204. When Plato puts into the mouth of Protagoras this theory of punishment, we are reminded of the story of an argument between Pericles and Protagoras, which lasted

knowledge. All virtues are so many aspects of knowledge; courage, for instance, is simply a proper knowledge of what really to be feared. Perfect virtue is perfect knowledge, perfect understanding of the world, and of man's place in the world; and few are those who ever enter into such knowledge. Because it is knowledge, it can be taught, in a far wider sense than Protagoras had ever meant: it can be taught by every means, and can only be fully taught by *all* the means, that give man a perfect understanding of the world. Instead of many phases of virtue, uncorrelated with one another and only dimly understood—instead of the inculcation of these in an empiric fashion by the ordinary, partly irrational ways of punishment and education and social influence, Socrates fixes his eyes on virtue one and indivisible, virtue which is perfect self-knowledge and therefore perfect self-mastery, ~~virtue taught~~ the "scientific" path of a full education, whose goal is a perfect knowledge of the world and thereby of man's soul. Once more, and here more definitely than ever, Plato's mind is travelling fast to the *Republic*.

In accordance with this high conception of virtue, the conception of political art assumes in the *Euthydemus* a correspondingly high position. If virtue is the perfect knowledge which controls every human action, the virtue of the statesman, or political art, must equally be a perfect knowledge which controls every action of the State. It is the kingly art, "which may be described, in the language of Æschylus, as alone sitting at the helm of the vessel of State, piloting and governing all things".¹

Since this art is knowledge, so its function is the instilling of knowledge. "All the other results of politics—wealth, freedom, tranquillity, are neither good nor evil in themselves: but political science ought to impart knowledge to us; it ought to make men wise and (thereby) good."² Since then all who practise political art must have perfect knowledge, it follows that in affairs of State—in matters of political art—only those who have perfect knowledge have a right to be heard. Wisdom must govern, by right of its wisdom: the tinker and the tailor

The *Euthydemus* on political art

¹ *Euthydemus*, 291 D; cf. *Gorgias*, 517 E; cf. *infra*, p. 166, and Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, ad initium.

² *Euthydemus*, 292 B.

they are scientific and based on principles. But there are also sham arts, which are only empiric, and spring from mere experience or routine. The dressing of the body to look healthy is the sham or simulacrum which usurps the place of gymnastics: cookery, pretending to care for the health of the body, is a sham which takes the form of medicine. What dressing is to gymnastics, that is sophistry to legislation: what cookery is to medicine, that is rhetoric to justice. Sophistry gives *false* principles to regulate the growth and action of the soul: rhetoric *pretends* to cure injustice, by making the worse cause appear the better. Thus the art of the great rhetorician Gorgias sinks to the mere pretence of a quack; and thus the oratory which the Sophists generally taught, and esteemed as the essence of political art, is proved to be a mere shadow and simulacrum of the true "judicial" aspect of that art.¹ But underneath this sham of rhetoric there lay a basis of false principles. The orator who valued, and taught others to value, mere eloquence, because it made the worse cause appear the better, was acting on the principle, and was inculcating the principle, that *external* success, howsoever and by whatever means attained, was the aim and endeavour of the soul: he was teaching that the king's daughter should only be dressed in clothing of wrought gold and raiment of needlework, and need not be all glorious within. One of the persons of the dialogue, Callicles, is made to expound this principle in its purest form. Convention, he urges, is one thing: Nature is another. Convention is made by the majority who are weak, "and they make laws and distribute praises and censures with a view to themselves and their own interests".² But "Nature herself intimates that it is just for the better to have more than the worse, the more powerful than the weaker". In ordinary life, the strong are under the tyranny of the weak, like young lions charmed with the sound of the voice. But "a man who had sufficient force would trample under foot all formulas and spells and charms, and all the laws which are against Nature; the slave would rise in rebellion and be lord over us, and the

¹There is something reminiscent of *Sartor Resartus* (the philosophy of "clothes" or quackeries) in the general view and in the very language of Plato. The passage in 523, where "clothes" are regarded as a barrier to a judgment of inner and essential truth, is especially like Carlyle.

²*Gorgias*, 483 B.

light of natural justice would shine forth".¹ Here in its purity is the false principle of sophistry propounded for the regulation of the soul's life and action. And this is not merely a sophistic view: it is the view of an Athenian statesman (for such, Plato tells us, is Callicles), who aspires to be a power in the political life of Athens. This then is the fashion of statesmen, and not merely the teaching of Sophists. Politicians desire only to win power for themselves by hook or by crook; and they act unconsciously on the principle which Callicles has candidly acknowledged, that the trappings of external power, howsoever they are won, are their life's sole aim and object. And how do they generally win such power? Why—by applying to government and the conduct of the State the very principles on which they conduct their own lives. As they dress their own souls into a fair seeming, instead of training them by a spiritual gymnastic to true health, so do they deal with the people. They "treat them with a view to pleasure":² they seek to guide them into the paths of mere external satisfaction, instead of training them to spiritual goodness. They use sophistry and not legislation; rhetoric and not justice. They indulge the whims of the people, that the people may indulge *their* appetite for power. Even against Pericles, the greatest figure of Athenian democracy, Plato brings this grave indictment.³ To get satisfaction for himself, he gave the people their satisfaction. To be the "first man" in Athens, "he gave the people pay, and made them idle and cowardly". He made his citizens worse men instead of better, as was proved in his own person, when at the end of his life they turned round on him in a fury, because affairs were not going as they wished. Not only Pericles, but all the statesmen of Athenian democracy, were equally "sham" statesmen. Serving-men of the State, instead of shepherds, they used their powers of persuasion and force not to improve, but only to please, their fellow-citizens. They were concerned, one may say in a metaphor, with cookery and dressing, cockering men up in mere external welfare. They remembered only—and Plato here speaks of their "art" from a slightly different, and less condemnatory, point of view)—what should be ministerial and subsidiary arts; they forgot the higher and magisterial art of establishing men in

iam States-
manship

¹ *Gorgias*, 484 A.

² *Cf. ibid.*, 513 D.

³ *Ibid.*, 515, 516.

all health of the soul by that right legislation, that administration of true justice, which are its proper training and healing.

They have filled the city full of harbours and docks and walls and revenues—and have left no room for justice and temperance.”¹ Such is the past of Athens: to-day (Plato makes

Socrates say) every man who would be a statesman must ask himself—“Am I to be the physician of the State, who will strive and struggle to make the Athenians as good as possible; or am I to be the servant and flatterer of the State?”² Such a ques-

tion Socrates had asked himself: he had answered that he would be a physician, telling the Athenians the things that were for their good; and therefore he is “the only Athenian living, who practises the art of true politics—the only politician of his time”.³

He is the only man who does his public duty, since, going about to preach righteousness, he does the true work of a statesman—he makes his citizens better men.⁴ And yet from another point

of view Socrates is not, and will not call himself, a politician.

He may have the right moral purpose; but he, who always professed that his knowledge was only knowledge of his own ignorance, could never claim the perfect knowledge of the true statesman. He could not show that he had been trained to the

art of politics, and had practised it successfully, as a true statesman should. For what is true of the builder is true of the

statesman; and as we should examine a man who wished to build us a house, in order to determine whether he knew the art

of building, and whether he had ever constructed a house suc-

cessfully, so and not otherwise must we examine the statesman

who would guide the State. From this we may gather that a

true statesman has two qualities—a right moral purpose, which

demands unselfishness, and makes for the betterment of the

citizens; and a full knowledge of political art, which demands

¹ *Gorgias*, 519 A. This judgment of Athenian democracy in the person of a *προστάται* may remind us of Stesimbrotus' pamphlet (*cf. supra*, p. 42), and of Aristotle's *Ἀθηναίων πολιτεία*. The principle followed is *οἷος ὁ κοστάτης, τοῖος καὶ ὁ δῆμος*.

² *Ibid.*, 521 A. ³ *Ibid.*, 521 D.

⁴ It is because he has been a true politician, Socrates tells us in the *Gorgias*, that he will be put to death. Having done nothing to please, but everything to improve the people—having been physician instead of cook or surveyor of dainties—he will be brought to trial by the false politicians he has rebuked, “just as a physician would be tried in a court of little boys at the indictment of a cook” (521 E).

specialisation, and requires regular training. The two qualities meet and are united in the conception of government as an art; if art is rightly conceived in its truth, and not in its mere simulacrum. For every artist, as Socrates taught, and Plato attempted to ensure by the scheme of the *Republic*, must know what he works at, and love what he knows: he must bring knowledge to his subject, and work for his subject's betterment.

So wrote Plato in the *Gorgias*, half as an aristocrat criticising the democratic past of Athens, half as a Socratic, vindicating his master against those who slew him. And so he proves, not only that virtue and political art are teachable (as he had argued in the *Meno* and the *Protagoras*), but also that there is sore need of their teaching. Thus is Socrates finally justified, and thus is the way of the future shown. Sham teaching must be overthrown: *delenda est ignorantia*. Sham statesmen, who exemplify in their practice the principles which underlie such sham teaching, must be banished from the State. Knowledge must come instead—true knowledge taught by a true teaching; and those in whose hearts and minds it is set must guide men's lives in its light. So we turn to the *Republic*, in which all these hints are gathered together and systematised—in which the true knowledge, the true teaching, the true statesmanship of the true State, are all exemplified. The writings of Plato which we have as yet considered have been negative, or preparatory: in the *Republic* comes the positive teaching, and in it arises the building which these foundations were meant to support. "The artist disposes all things in order, and compels the one part to harmonise and accord with the other part, until he has constructed a regular and systematic whole."¹ In the *Republic* political art does its perfect work of construction.

¹ *Gorgias*, 503 E-504 A.

CHAPTER III

THE *REPUBLIC*, OR *CONCERNING JUSTICE*

THE PLAN AND MOTIVES OF THE *REPUBLIC*

§ 1. **T**HE *Republic*, which was composed in the maturity of Plato's life, between his fortieth and his sixtieth year, and thus, better than any other dialogue, represents the fulness of his thought, has come down to us with a double title — "the State" (in Latin, *respublica*; hence the name by which it generally goes), "*or concerning Justice*". In spite of these two titles, it must not be assumed that it is a treatise either on political science or on jurisprudence. It is both, and it is yet more than both. It is an attempt at a complete philosophy of man. It deals as it were with the physiology and pathology of the human soul in its environment. Primarily, it is concerned with man in action, and occupied therefore with the problems of moral and political life. But man is a whole: his action cannot be understood apart from his thinking. Socrates had even thought that right action absolutely depended upon right knowledge. And therefore the *Republic* is also a philosophy of man in thought, and of the laws of his thinking. Viewed in this way, as a complete philosophy of man, the *Republic* forms a single and organic whole. Viewed in its divisions, it would almost seem to fall into four treatises, each occupied with its separate subject. There is a treatise on metaphysics, which exhibits the unity of all things in the Idea of the Good. There is a treatise on moral philosophy, which investigates the virtues of the human soul, and shows their union and perfection in justice. There is a treatise on education: "the *Republic*," said Rousseau, "is not a work upon politics, but the finest treatise on education that ever was written". Finally, there is a

Plan of the
Republic

morality (the sphere of the State); and its "absolute" activity in art, religion, and philosophy.¹ But German criticism, according to its wont, has set itself to dissect the *Republic* into a number of "lays," written at different times, and afterwards welded together. There is Republic A (to take one instance of such dissection), comprising a discussion of justice, which involves the building of a State and a sketch of its gradual corruption; and there is Republic B, a treatise upon metaphysics.² Republic A is practical and political: it is written in the first period of Plato's thought, when in the heat of his young blood he fancied that he could rejuvenate the world, and when the disillusion of failure had not yet driven him from trying to shape living men and actual affairs after a new pattern, to dwell instead with "bloodless categories" in the heavens. Republic B belongs to this latter period of exile and of transcendentalism; while still a third epoch is marked by the time when, weary of the unsubstantial company of ideas, Plato returned, a foiled circuitous wanderer, to men and their cities, and once more, but with a moderation bought by previous failure, attempted to fashion both, if after a less novel manner, in the *Laws*. Such an anatomy of the *Republic* and of Plato has the merit of bringing into relief the practical bent which distinguishes the book and its author; but it is too clear-cut to be true, and too scientific to be correct. A book grows under the writer's hands, through weeks and months and years, and the attitude from which one chapter was written is not as the attitude from which a later chapter was composed. The author is not as the critic: his book has a background in his mind, and this makes compatible in his eyes what may seem inconsistencies to the critic; while even if he leaves inconsistencies, it is only a proof that he is human, and not a piece of precise mechanism. And in any case, an artist like Plato can hardly have pasted together the *magnum opus* of his

¹ To some extent the *Republic* seems to stand half-way between Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind* and Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*. It combines the philosophic breadth and system of the one, with the ardent hatred of shams and the keen sense of the spiritual foundations of life which distinguish the other.

² Rep. A includes i.-v. 471, and viii.-ix.; Rep. B includes v. (471)-vii.; while book x. is A-B, the transition. This is Pfeleiderer's division. Nettleship admits that books v.-vii. form a distinct section (possibly inserted), because they are different in tone from the other books, and one can easily read on from iv. to viii.

it postulates, it is difficult to agree with the view of Greek political thought which it suggests, or to admit that the reform of the State proposed by Plato is meant as an economic reform of an economic evil. Plato may touch upon economic questions ; but he always regards them as moral questions, affecting the life of man as a member of a moral society. He speaks in praise of the division of labour, for instance ; but we soon learn, that division of labour concerns him, not as the best method of economic production, but as a means to the welfare of the soul.

§ 2. But while we see reason to disagree with the application of either political economy or “anatomy” to the *Republic*, we may none the less admit that its practical motive is a fact. It is written in the imperative mood. Its author seeks the truth, but he seeks it in order that it shall make men free. The philosophy of mind is written not by way of an analysis, but rather for warning and counsel. In this, indeed, it is true to the general character of the political thought of Greece ; but in Plato, more than in Aristotle, the note of warning and of counsel is dominant. Indignation makes the *Republic*. Much of its eloquence and its zeal spring from a spirit of wrath, alike with contemporary teaching and with contemporary practice. First and foremost, the teaching of Sophistic Radicals must be overthrown. Much as he was like them (for was not he too a Radical?)—perhaps because he was like them, Plato waged a long and unrelenting crusade against their tenets. Half professors, and as such thinking their way to new ideas—half journalists, and as such occupied with the dissemination of those ideas—they were still more dangerous as journalists than as professors ; for they disseminated their ideas among the young as they made their progresses through Greece, and it was the young who flocked to their lectures, and were trained by them for their future career in politics. The Sophist and not Socrates was the true *corruptor juventutis* ; and if Greece was not to follow in the paths they had indicated, their hold on the young must be destroyed, and their teaching exposed. They had preached (so it seemed to Plato) a new ethics, or “justice,” of self-satisfaction ; and they had revolutionised politics accordingly, by making the authority of the State a means to the self-

The *Re*
directed
against
Sophist

towards that end by the wisdom of those who know the nature of the soul and the purpose of the world.

But this, which is the "idea" of the State, and its natural and normal condition, was exactly what in ordinary practice the State was not. The spirit of excessive individualism had infected not only theory, but actual life; and the Sophists were only popular, because they had caught what was in the air. The actual States of Greece seemed to Plato to have lost their true character, and to have forgotten their true aim. And in opposition to the prevalent perversion of the ordinary State, Plato turns as vehemently Radical and subversive, as in opposition to Sophistic teaching he had shown himself Conservative. In either attitude he is consistent with himself. If, like Aristophanes, he attacks the Sophists and rehabilitates justice—if again, like the Sophists themselves, he attacks existing politics and seeks to import a new principle into affairs—it is always in order to enforce a true conception of man's soul, and of the nature of the State, and of the proper relations of both.

What then were the defects from which the States of Greece seemed to Plato to be suffering? Thinking mainly of the Athenian democracy in which he lived (and at the hands of which Socrates had died), he found in contemporary politics two great and serious flaws. One was the ubiquity of ignorance—masquerading in the guise of knowledge: the other was a political selfishness which divided every city into two hostile sections, standing "in the state and posture of gladiators" over against one another. There were two classes of men whom Plato's soul hated—the amateur, who dabbled in politics as readily and as inefficiently as he did in every other pursuit on which he could lay his hands; and the self-seeker, who touched politics only to make them pitch, and by his self-seeking made for a permanent state of civil war. To create efficiency—to restore integrity and, with it, harmony—was therefore Plato's concern: "specialisation" and "unification" were therefore his two watchwords. To these two aims the political teaching of the *Republic* is addressed; and as means to these ends its apparent eccentricities, like the communism of wives, acquire meaning and find justification.

Ignorance was to Plato the especial curse of democracy.

It is natural for us to-day to sympathise with the principle, upon which Plato bases much of his ideal State, that every man shall do that which it is his function to do, and shall be trained to its doing. The work of government must be done by a governing class; and if that class is trained to its work, so much the better. The mistake of Plato was, that in his eagerness to deprive the masses of the right of government itself, he wrested from them also the right of making the government, which must, as Aristotle afterwards argued, in the name alike of expediency and justice, be given into their hands.¹ •

But nothing impressed Plato more in contemporary politics, and nothing more surely drove him along the path of Radical reform, than that violent spirit of individualism, which engaged in the eager pursuit of its own satisfaction, captured the offices of the State for the better fulfilling of its own selfish purposes, and divided every city into two hostile camps of rich and poor, oppressors and oppressed. If the busy-body was the type of democracy, oligarchy in particular made its people a people of Ishmaelites. The ruling body always tended to dissensions within its own ranks, and it was always in a state of opposition to its subjects. An oligarchical city was a city set in two camps, each spying for an opportunity against the other. And the root of all evil was the love of money. It had been well if this passion had been confined to private life; but it infected politics. The rich who sought to be still richer monopolised office for the sake of the advantage which its corrupt use might give them in their private enterprise: they seized the authority of the State for the sake of the "spoils" which it might bring. The State, whose essence it is that it should be a neutral and impartial arbitrator between the different interests of different classes, became itself the tool of one of these classes. The government, instead of binding class to class, merely accentuated their differences by adding its weight to strengthen one class against

Political
selfishness

¹ It is obvious that representative institutions make the way easier for modern democracy. Provided that the people elects its representatives, it may be willing to be governed by the best. It is when there is primary, unrepresentative government, that inefficiency and ignorance emerges. Where there are representative institutions, one can unite the democratic principle of rule by the people with the Socratic and Platonic principle of rule by the Wisest and Best. Accordingly, it may be said that Plato was not criticising democracy in its essence, but in a particular (and perverted) manifestation.

of the rich over the poor, or of the poor over the rich, but of something either above or at any rate combining both. Whereas "men came to public affairs hungering for their own profit thereby," and, "as a result, struggles for office arose which grew into civil war,"¹ there must be unselfish government and civic harmony. •

There were, then, two factors—a certain meddlesomeness, which its friends called many-sidedness, characteristic of democracy, and a political selfishness, resulting in constant disunion, characteristic both of oligarchy and of democracy—which suggested to Plato the direction of future reform. It is noticeable that these two factors correspond to the teaching of the Sophists, who had, as was said above, only caught what was in the air. • If they had spoken of "self-satisfaction" as the proper motto for the conduct of life; if they had preached that a man should "let himself go" anywhere and everywhere for the satisfaction of his own desires; so too had democracy laid down the rule that a man should "do as he liked"—so too had the democratic man rushed into every channel of action he could find for his own satisfaction. Plato himself notes this affinity, and remarks that the democratic man is the prey of "quack" theories which turn black white and white black, and, dethroning order and measure and temperance from his mind, set on the vacant throne disorder and chaos and excess.² And as, again, the Sophists had preached the right of the ruler to rule for his own advantage; as they had elevated political selfishness into the ideal of politics; so had the cities of Greece allowed office to be actually made a source of private advantage—so too had they admitted the principle, that the strongest power in the State should rule the State for its own interests. Sophistic teaching had been but a glorification of common error: in attacking the one, Plato is also attacking the other.

Connection of Sophistic teaching and contemporary politics

It is from the common error of *πολυπραγμοσύνη* that Plato starts in constructing his State; and in opposition to the gospel of many-sidedness he enunciates that of specialisation—let "the vague universality of a Man" be moulded into "the specific Craftsman".³ The Sophists had, to some extent, been apostles of "many-sidedness"; and Hippias of Elis had

¹ *Republic*, 521 A. ² *Ibid.*, 560 B-C. ³ *Sartor Resartus*, ii., c. iv.

But the way of specialisation was also the way of unification. If a separate class were appointed for the work of government, there would hardly be any room for the old struggle to gain control of the government. If each class abode within its own boundaries, concentrated upon its own work, no class would ever come into conflict with another. Civil dissension had been rendered possible by the want of specialisation. Because there was no proper government ready and able to do its work, there had been the conflict of selfish aspirants for office: because there had been in every State a number of men with no settled function or regular place—men who had more than their own place, or men who had no proper place at all—there had been all the jostling and turbulence which had culminated in civil war. With specialisation these things would cease. Justice would be the present and moving Spirit of the State: each class would work at its appointed function in contentment. But even so, it may be asked, is there guarantee that the ruling class will rule unselfishly? There may be no rush for office and no jostling of classes; but yet all will be lost if the government is selfish. The answer is, we learn from Plato, that those who confine themselves to the discharge of their function cannot be selfish. Selfishness consists in going outside one's own sphere, and trespassing upon that of another (*πλεονεξία*); and the training to which the rulers have been subjected in their own special work is sufficient security against truancy or trespass. Moreover, they have been trained in an art—the art of government; and that art, like every other (for instance the art of physician or teacher), is designed to promote the welfare of its subjects. If they really know their profession and are not pretenders, they must be unselfishly minded by the very nature of their art. Nor are all who have been trained destined to become governors. To make the assurance of unselfishness doubly and triply sure, Plato reserves office for those, and only those, who have,

other is—"put thought into it". The desire has not been unspoken—"would that our rulers, like those of Plato, might be picked men, and men trained for their work"; and it has been argued that, in view of the complexity of modern conditions, and the consequent need of special gifts and appropriate training, some regular preparation for the work of the State, other than such as comes of itself in the hurly-burly of politics, will be increasingly necessary (*cf.* Sidney Low, *Governance of England*, p. 304 *sqq.*).

- under a system of trials and temptations which seems almost Jesuitically subtle, held firm to the belief that the weal of the State is their own weal, and its woe their own woe. But besides all these spiritual means—(besides this training for a special work, this training in an art which as an art must be unselfish, this selection of those whom the special training has shown to be most unselfish)—there is finally the material guarantee of communism. Rulers who have no home, no family, no possessions, have no temptation to selfishness: they have nowhere to carry their gains, nobody upon whom to spend them, no interest in making them.

The conclusion of the whole matter would seem then to be this—let each man do his own appointed work in contentment. But this in Plato's eyes is justice; and therefore the *Republic* is also called "a treatise concerning justice". Its purpose is the substitution of a true conception of justice for the false views which common error and sophistic teaching had contrived to spread; and whether he is combating the Sophists, or reforming society, justice is the hinge of Plato's thought, and the text of his discourse. It remains therefore to inquire, what were the views of justice which Plato found current, and what were the reasons for which he rejected those views: in what way he justified the conception which he advocated, and what were the results to which that conception led. In the course of this inquiry, we shall be expounding in detail what has already been sketched in outline—the polemic of Plato against the Sophistic conception of justice, and his reconstruction of the State with a view to realising his own conception of its nature. We shall see how, beginning as it were dimly with the practical principle of specialisation, Plato throws fresh and fresh lights on its meaning, until finally, in the blaze of the "Idea of the Good," we realise that in specialisation only is justice to be found—for justice, being seen, is nothing more and nothing less than man's performance of the part which the purpose of the world demands that he shall play.

THE *PRIMA FACIE* THEORY OF JUSTICE

§ 3. The first conception of justice which Plato seriously studies is one which is enunciated by Thrasymachus, and which

represents what Plato understood to be the view entertained by the Sophists. Thrasymachus takes up two positions, and is successively driven from both. Understanding by justice (what is understood throughout the *Republic*) the standard and rule of action for a man living in a community,¹ he defines it first as "the interest of the stronger". In other words, might is right; a man ought to do what he can do, and deserves what he can get. This is to identify *jus* with *potentia*, after the manner of Spinoza; but while Spinoza somewhat inconsistently limits the *potentia* of each individual by the *imperium* of a State, which enforces a peace consisting in rational virtue, Thrasymachus logically enough argues that the *imperium* of a State merely lays down as the law whatever is to its own interest, and simply makes into justice by its superior power the rights which it claims as the strongest. Accordingly, the standard of action for a man living in a community is, according to Thrasymachus, the will of a ruler who wills his own good; and this, he maintains, is what one must inevitably see, if one looks at the facts with an unblinking eye. For while every man acts for himself, and tries to get what he can, the strongest is surest to get what he wants; and as in a State the government is the strongest (or else it would not be the government), it will try to get, and it will get, whatever it wants for itself. Justice thus being whatever is for the ruler's interest, it follows that, for everybody other than the ruler, justice may really and in truth be defined, according to a popular definition, as "another's good". To be

Thrasymachus
definition of
Justice

¹ It must be noted that no legal significance attaches to "justice" in Plato's use of the word. We must not suppose for a moment any distinction of private morality and public duty, or restrict justice to the latter. The two are one; and justice is both. Justice is the standard of action to be observed, both by a man acting as a member of a community, and by a number of men acting together as a single community. It is thus the one standard for all human action; for in one of these two ways men must always act. It is the answer to the simplest of questions—What is it that I ought to try to do? There is no question of any difference between what I ought to do as a man upon my conscience, and what I ought to do as a citizen under the law. I always am a citizen, and there is only one "ought". Some distinction there is indeed in Plato, between justice as in one member of a community, and justice as in all the members acting together as a community. But this is a different distinction; and it is not one of principle. Justice whether in the one member (the individual) or all the members (the State), has the same essential nature, and it is only the scope of its action which is different. We must not distinguish politics from ethics (*cf.* Introduction, p. 6).

"just" is to be a means to the satisfaction of another: to be "unjust" is to act for the satisfaction of oneself. But the real standard of action for any sensible man is to satisfy himself; and therefore injustice and not justice is the real virtue and the true prudence. The wise man is he who will be just, and satisfy his ruler's selfish desires, *if he must*; but who, *if he can*, will be unjust, and satisfy his own.

Thus, in Plato's view, do quack theories turn black into white, and make the better argument appear the worse. There is a certain attraction in such theories. The view that the strongest individuality should dominate the rest is after all not unlike modern theories of the Overman, such as one finds in Nietzsche and even in the hero-worship of Carlyle. The whole position represents the revolt of an awakened self-consciousness against the traditional morality, in which it has hitherto passively acquiesced, but which it now brings to the bar of this new sense of self for judgment. The new sense of self is keen and urgent: it finds in traditional morality merely a number of limitations on its play; and in its young vigour it thrusts them aside, and claims room for free expression. With a fresh naïveté it enunciates its new doctrine: "I will do whatever I can, and seek whatever I like". Its cardinal error is the pettiness of its view of self, as an isolated thing to be fed with pleasure and fattened with power; and those who like Plato have to expose this error must answer by urging a true conception of the nature and the "rights" of human individuality. They must show that the self is no isolated unit, but part of an order with a "station" in that order, and that fulness of expression and true consciousness of pleasure are to be found in doing one's duty in the station to which one is called. And this is the ultimate answer which Plato gives, and writes the *Republic* in order to give. For the present, however, he satisfies himself with a logical refutation. He takes the two positions which are advanced by Thrasymachus—that a government governs for its own advantage, and that injustice is better than justice—and deals with them each in turn. To the former view he opposes the Socratic conception of government as an art. All arts, he argues, are called into existence by defects in the material with which they deal. The physician attempts to remedy the defect

of the body; the teacher those of the mind. The aim and object of every art is the perfection of its material: the perfect teacher, for instance, is he who has remedied all the defects, and elicited all the possibilities, of his pupil's mind. And therefore the ruler, so far as he acts as a ruler, and in accordance with his art, is absolutely unselfish: his one aim is the welfare of the citizens who are committed to his care. As a man in need of subsistence—as one who pursues the art of earning a wage—he may indeed seek his own advantage, and earn a wage by the work of his office; but this he does not do as a ruler, or as practising the art of government, but as an earner of wages, and as one practising the art of wage-earning. This is Plato's answer to the first position of Thrasymachus; and to the second he answers by an argument, designed to prove that the just man is a wiser, a stronger, and a happier man than the unjust. He is wiser, because he sees the necessity of acknowledging a limit (πέρας) to his actions—in other words, because he does not blindly rush at every pleasure, but walks steadily along a definite line towards a definite object. Limit is not here used (it never was used by the Greeks) in the sense of a restraint, but in the sense of a guide. It means a principle imposed by reason; which, by narrowing the countless avenues of activity down to a single path, guides man along that path.¹ Wiser, because he acknowledges such a principle, the just man is also stronger. Even if a number of men would fain be unjust, to get the strength for an unjust action they must be just: they must stand shoulder to shoulder, and act justly by one another. Wiser and stronger, in the strength of a principle which binds him to his fellows, the just man is also, last of all, the happier man. The argument by which Plato proves this last attribute of the just man is one of supreme importance. He starts from the position, which has just been proved, that the just man is wiser than the unjust. But because he is the wiser, he is also the better, since the wise man is also the good. Goodness, or excellence (ἀρετή), is therefore to be predicated of the just man. Now ἀρετή is a general quality, which may be defined as the

¹ The conception of limit here enunciated is one which is very prominent in *Aristotle* (cf. *infra*, pp. 229-30, on the end as limit; and pp. 472-73, on the "mean" State).

public opinion. Accordingly Plato turns to the criticism of such public opinion; and, in order to show that justice is grounded in human nature—in order to show what it is, by proving it to be the natural order of the human soul—he leaves his logic for psychology, and deserts his analysis of terms for an analysis of human nature.¹

The new point of view is stated by Glaucōn, for the express purpose of being “devoured by the shrewd thought” of Socrates. Glaucōn's
Conception of
Justice Without adopting the position of Thrasymachus, that justice is the will of the strongest when directed towards his own interests, he contends, in the same spirit as Thrasymachus, that justice — is an artificial thing, the product of convention. Stating practically the position which Hobbes afterwards adopted, he argues that in a state of Nature men do and suffer injustice freely and without restraint. But the weaker, finding that they suffer more injustice than they can inflict, make a contract one with another neither to do injustice, nor to suffer it to be done; and, in pursuance of the contract, they lay down a law, the provisions of which are henceforth the standard of action and the code of justice. Thus human nature abandons its real instinct, which is towards self-satisfaction, and consents to be “perverted” henceforth by the duress of the law. The whole of this theory, which is not only that of Glaucōn, but also that of Hobbes²—and indeed it is the *prima facie* theory to which our first instincts naturally spring—has been met by modern Objections to
Glaucōn's
conception thinkers point by point. In the first place, there never was such a contract: there is and always will be a condition of

¹ Nettleship, *Lectures*, p. 48.

² For Hobbes too believes that the sense of right is a thing not inherent in man, but created by a compact, and enforced by a power. “Before the name of just and unjust can have place, there must be some coercive power” (C. xv.): “for in the differences of private men, to declare what is equity, what is justice, and what is moral virtue, and to make them binding, there is need of the ordinances of sovereign power” (C. xxvi.). The fundamentally wrong thing in his position is (exactly what Plato urges against Glaucōn's position) the view of human nature which it implies—the individualistic view that man is a selfish unit, that “in the nature of man we find three principal causes of quarrel, first competition, secondly diffidence, and thirdly glory”. With such a view, justice can only be regarded as an artificial thing, doing violence to the instincts of human nature in the interests of a self-preservation, which the unchecked indulgence of instinct prevents. Accordingly Hobbes has to be met—as Plato meets Glaucōn—by a refutation of the view that man is by nature a selfish unit, and by an opposite theory of human nature.

But Plato's method of answering Glaucon's position is simpler and more elemental. He sets himself to prove that justice does not depend for its origin upon a chance convention, or for its validity upon external force—that, on the contrary, it is from everlasting to everlasting, and is strong with the majesty of itself—by simply showing that it is the right condition of the human soul, demanded by the very nature of man when seen (as he must be seen) in the fulness of his environment. Justice thus becomes something internal:¹ it is as if Plato's Muse had said—"Look into thine heart, and write". But instead of attempting at once a psychology of the human mind, Plato adopts a method which at first sight seems curious. If we had to read a manuscript, he suggests, of which there were two copies, one in a small minuscule, and the other in uncials, we should certainly attempt to read the copy which was written in uncials. Justice is like such a manuscript: it is one and the same, but it exists in two copies, and one of these is larger than the other. It exists both in the State and in the individual; but it exists on a larger scale and in a more visible fashion in the State. Accordingly Plato proposes to consider first justice as it exists in the State, in its broadest and strongest lines; and not only so, but to consider it as it exists in a *nascent* State,² in its simplest and clearest form. And therefore, that justice may be made manifest, he builds an imaginary State from the beginning, and enters definitely upon the ground of political speculation.

Plato's met
of answerin
Glaucon

X

PLATO'S CONSTRUCTION OF THE STATE AND DISCOVERY OF TRUE JUSTICE

§ 4. Here then the purely political thought of Plato may be said to begin, if such a phrase is permissible in speaking of a thinker, who always, like his pupil Aristotle, thought his politics and his ethics together. But before we examine the

¹ Whereas by Thrasymachus and Glaucon it had been regarded as something external, a body of material precepts confronting the soul, and claiming to control it in virtue of a power external to it.

² Similarly Aristotle, in the first book of the *Politics*, proposes to consider a *nascent* State, first, in order to explain the difference between the State and the Household. But, as we shall see, it is a logical, and not an historical birth of the State, which Plato really considers.

acts in its social aspect, because he believes that all social phenomena are its products. "States do not come out of an oak or a rock, but from the characters of the men that dwell therein."¹

All the institutions of man are merely so many expressions of his mind. His institutions are his ideas.² Law is part of his thought: justice is a habit of his mind. These things have outward and visible signs—a written code, a judicial bench; but the inward and spiritual thought which makes them and sustains them is the one reality. It is hard to think oneself away from the visible, and to regard it as the mere vesture of thought: it is easier to see justice in maces and parchments, than to see it as a living thought. Yet that we should thus turn inward—that we should leave the conceptions of Glaucon, and follow Socrates in seeing justice in the mind of man—is the great step which we have to make. It is the step which Plato and Aristotle both made;³ and herein lies their great contribution to political thought for all time. Yet against Plato one may bring the accusation, that he did not carry the truth he had seen to its right conclusion. He saw that the institutions of a community must be its thoughts: he did not sufficiently recognise that they must be thought and willed by the *whole community*. For the Republic which he builds is of the nature of a benevolent despotism: its rulers are those who have thought their way to truth, and who enforce upon subjects who have neither thought it nor willed it the truth which they have realised themselves. And the institutions which he suggests for his rulers—a common property and a common family—are thoughts which ordinary men will never think, "as long as human nature remains the same".

In constructing the State from which he proceeds to illustrate the nature of the soul, Plato presupposes a certain amount of psychology in advance. He makes to some extent a *petitio principii*.⁴ The State being a product of the human soul, its

Plato's Psychology

¹ *Republic*, 544 D; cf. Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, 56-57.

ὡς οὐδὲν ἐστὶν οὔτε πύργος οὔτε ναὺς
ἔρημος ἀνδρῶν μὴ ξυνοικούντων ἔσω.

² Bosanquet, *Philosophical Theory of the State*. ³ Cf. *infra*, pp. 323-24.

⁴ Plato builds a State to illustrate man; but he presupposes a knowledge of man in building it.

l, which at any time go to make up that creation of man's
l which we call the State. As he takes each in turn, and
l order which proceeds from the lowest to the highest, there
appearance of historical method in his construction of the
l. But it is only an appearance. He does not mean that
State began as economic association based upon the division
bour, although he begins with such an association. He
not mean that there was a progress from a "simple" to a
nrious" State, though he proceeds from the one to the
r himself. He knows that "the features he ascribes to
are taken from the Athens of his day".¹ The same warn-
which applies to Plato's sketch of the growth of the State,
applies to his sketch of its corruption. That sketch is no
rical *résumé* of the constitutional changes of Greece—though
ears that appearance, because, starting from the ideal State
h issues from ideal psychological conditions, it proceeds
ually downwards to the worst form of State, which results
the worst psychological conditions. It is an attempt to
r, that while the presence of the sum of right conditions in
human soul means a true State, each diminution of that
means *pro tanto* a corruption of the State. It is an attempt
to illustrate from the large letters of the injustice of the
the nature of injustice in the individual, in the same way
ie justice of the State has already been made to illustrate
of the individual. But in criticising it, as he does, on histori-
rounds, Aristotle is beside the mark.

Besides an implied psychological basis, there is also an im-
conception of the true nature of justice—that each should
s own—present from the first in Plato's construction of the
l. The doctrine of specialisation, which Plato so much
es to see realised, for the sake of efficiency, as well as
ise it means justice, appears even in the lowest psycho-
al stage of the State. Beginning with desire as the primary
of the State, Plato shows that it involves some form of
iation. The desires for food and warmth and shelter

Appetitive or
economic
element

Nettleship, *Lectures*, p. 10. The same may be said of Hobbes' apparently
ical construction of the State in the *Leviathan*. That too is logical;
he features presented by Hobbes are those of contemporary England, as
presented themselves to him.

those who are of the house he guards, though fierce to every stranger. Now the watch-dog is mild and gentle to all whom it knows. Those whom it knows it also loves: according to its knowledge, and by the use of the faculty of knowledge (which is reason), it distinguishes between friend and foe. The faculty of reason must therefore be present in the guardian of the State, that he may distinguish between the citizen whom he defends, and the enemy whom he attacks. In the soldier reason thus appears as a mere empiric knowledge, which is mixed with a dominant quality of spirit, and expresses itself in an instinctive affection for the object of knowledge, because it is known and familiar. But reason expresses itself most (because it expresses itself in its purity, and not as a mere corrective of spirit) in the government of a State. It is perfect, not in the guardian, but in the "perfect guardian," or ruler. Reason, as we have said, is a twofold thing: by it we know, but by it we also love; and there is in it both an intellectual element of apprehension, and an element as it were of affection and attraction. The very watch-dog loves as well as knows, and loves because he knows.¹ Now the quality which Plato originally postulates for the ruler—the element of mind which he originally believes to be expressed in the government of the State—is reason in its aspect of affection (412 D-E). The ruler must be wise; but what impresses Plato most in the earlier part of the *Republic* is that he must be loving (*κηδεμών τῆς πόλεως*). The men who will govern the State best are those who care for it most, and those who care for it most are those who believe² that its welfare is their welfare, and its mishap their mishap. If this be the element of mind expressed in the government, the government

¹ This will explain the bearing of the Socratic principle that virtue is knowledge. It is easy to object, that to know that a thing is right is not to do the thing, and that there is *will* besides knowledge. But, in the first place, knowledge here means more than the mere knowledge that A is right and B is wrong: it means an understanding of the world in the light of a principle. Secondly, such understanding is conceived as involving an attraction, and as resulting in a will in accordance with itself. The philosophic element which understands is thereby attracted to whatever it understands—truth, or art, or virtue. To have a liberal education is to love the truth which it teaches: instead of the "will to believe" of which modern writers have spoken, there is belief issuing in will.

² The belief is an *ὀρθὴ δόξα*, a right opinion, without a scientific basis. It may also be said, therefore, that what Plato originally demands of his rulers is a right opinion; while afterwards he demands scientific knowledge.

say, what is the purpose of all doing and of all being—what is the end in the light of which all human action and all existence have a meaning, in order that he may do the work, which is appointed to him in the scheme of things, in such a way as to make it serve the fulfilling of this end. In the ruler, therefore, that final element of mind must express itself, which grapples with the mystery of existence, and arrives at a solution of its meaning. If in him this element is incarnate, then, and then only, has a State come into being, which is the creation (and also the image) of the fulness of man's mind. For if the mind of man is capable of this exaltation of reason, if it can attain to a condition of perfection in which reason guides its operations by the light of a supreme purpose, the State must also be capable of this exaltation, and must equally attain its perfection when, and only when, it is guided by the insight of a philosophic reason. This flows inevitably from the premise on which the *Republic* is based, that the State is the product of man's mind, and that each aspect of the State is the product of an element of mind. The synthesis of the State from each of its spiritual factors cannot therefore but culminate in the conception, that it is not only an economic, not only a military, but also a rational organisation, and as such guided by the highest reason which is possible for man. The "philosopher-king" is not a mere addition or insertion: he is the logical result of the whole method on which the construction of the State has proceeded.

From this new conception of the ruler, as a philosopher rather than a lover of the State, a new method of selection naturally flows. Instead of attempting by moral tests to discover those who care most for the State, we must now, by an intellectual test of philosophic power, eliminate those few who can guide it with the profoundest wisdom. But by either path we come upon a specialised class of rulers, to whom their ruling is an art for which they have been selected in view of a special aptitude which they, and they alone, possess. Nor are such special gifts their only distinction. When he considers the ruler as necessarily a philosopher, Plato postulates besides aptitude a special training, above and beyond the training of the soldier, which shall elicit and direct a philosophic nature.

forced to live as a citizen with a third of his mind? To take two instances: the ruler must live by reason, and abnegate desire: accordingly, he is subjected to a communistic *régime* which prevents the chance of desire, and thus violence is done by the excision of an integral element of human nature. Again, the farmer must live for the satisfaction of desire: he must be regulated in so doing by the external reason of the perfect guardian; and thus he suffers an atrophy of his rational self.¹

This mistake of turning each psychical element into a separate social class ultimately springs from a flaw in Plato's psychology. He separates too harshly and too clearly the various elements of mind. He trichotomises the soul "with a trichotomising hatchet". He conceives of desire as distinct from reason: he even speaks of an eternal war between desire and reason, in which spirit is sometimes reason's ally. He does indeed conceive of a unity of the soul; but it is a unity not of reconciliation but of subjugation. The ideal condition of the soul is one, in which reason has conquered desire, and erected a trophy, and rules as despot over the vanquished. This is (or tends to be) the Platonic conception of Ethics,² and by it a rigid separation is combined with a rigid unification. The separatism of this psychology invades the State, and brings separation there. The unification of this system of Ethics also invades the State, and finds its political parallel in the benevolent despotism of the philosophic ruler, to whom the economic and even the military classes are eventually subjected as blindly as are desire and spirit to the rational faculty. Aristotle (thinking of Plato's communism) accused the *Republic* of the vice of "excessive unification": in truth, it can be accused both of excessive separatism, in its caste-like division of classes, and of an excessive unification, not only in respect of the communism, which unifies the rulers by cutting away their desires, but also in respect of the despotism, which unifies the State by subjecting it utterly to the ruler. The fault lies not in Plato's conception of the

Criticism
three-cla
system

¹ The same criticism may indeed be passed on Aristotle. The economic classes, "without which the State cannot exist," but which do not share in its moral life "according to reason," are equally maimed.

² Reason is as a charioteer with two steeds to his chariot, Spirit and Desire, driving aloft to the heavenly places, but only too often dragged down again to earth by recalcitrant Desire.

'silver' man is born which is perfect, because it is the pro-
 'silver' parents is born a the whole of human mind. As the
 o pass, the rulers must ac. it consists in the full discharge
 'silver' man to the rank ore specific function for which, by
 'golden' man to the position of they have given it in the society,
 and each man finds his appointed a of the State is the citizen's
 reason within him, he will have scope ra of the duty of a ~~public~~
 s stifled in the development of man by this differentiation,
 Plato would fain believe: on the contrary, there is opportunity
 given, such as without it there could not be, for the fullest use
 of every power. And again, whatever the criticisms one may
 pass on Plato's separatism, it must none the less be admitted,
 that it means specialisation, and spells efficiency. The setting
 aside to their work of those who are called to be rulers and
 soldiers is also the banishing of ignorance from politics; and
 not the least of the defects which Plato traced in contemporary
 states disappears, with the disappearance of sham statesman-
 ship. Finally, this separation of class from class, which separ-
ates especially the governing from the producing classes (liable
 as it is to the criticism, which Aristotle passes upon it, that it
 bisects the State into two halves each with its different temper
 and with its different institutions), may yet be said to make
 for political unselfishness. On one side stands the economic
 Society: on the other rises the State in the person of the
 guardians—a State carefully detached by a system of commun-
 ism from the economic Society, and likely neither to interfere
 with it nor to be influenced by it. The distinction between
 Society and the State, which the Greeks tended to ignore ~~man~~
 here be said to find a full expression.¹

But above all, in this separation and specialisation li
 clue to that which the whole argument is intended to dis
 the nature of justice. In finally discovering justice, as it
 in the State, Plato pursues a method of residues. Making
 he conceived to be a "complete enumeration" of the virt
 the State, justice, wisdom, courage and self-control (the

¹ "State" is here used in the sense of "government". Hilde
 however, argues that even Plato has no true conception of the "i
 the State, i.e., of an organ representative of the common interest: h
 a class sovereign. But that class is viewed by Plato as an organ
 common interest, if not as a "representative" organ.

relation of the State to the human mind assigns to each of the of his conception of the human mind claims the place that that separatism to the State—in justice. Now the “virtues” of reason, and the application down before, are the virtues is his view of human nature where. Wisdom accordingly must his politics, which follow logic which directs the State by must be urged against. But be the virtue of the soldiers; and self-control, it might seem, that of the producing classes. But self-control is more than the virtue of any one class. It is a virtue which is attained, when desire submits to rule and regimen; and in the State self-control will accordingly be, on its passive side the recognition by the producing and military classes of the need of submitting to rule, on its active side the enforcement of such rule by the government. As a whole, therefore, it is a harmony between these elements, resulting from the presence of the same conviction in all. What then is justice, and where is the place of its habitation? It is simply the specialisation of which we have spoken before: it is simply the will to concentrate on one’s own sphere of duty (*τὸ αὐτοῦ πράττειν*), and not to meddle with the sphere of another; and its habitation therefore is in the heart of every citizen who does his duty in his appointed place. The ruler, for instance, must be wise, and if he shows wisdom in his work, and cleaves to wisdom as his true vocation, he is thereby just—or rather (for it is the virtue of the State of which we are speaking) the State is just, because its member, in his appointed place, has done his right work as a member.¹ In this sense justice is the condition of every other virtue of the State: unless a citizen concentrates on his own sphere of duty, he will not show the virtue which that sphere demands. In a word, therefore, justice is the principle of a society, consisting of different types of men (the producing type, the military type, the ruling type), who have combined under the impulse of a mutual need, and by their combination in one

¹ The true ruler will show wisdom, self-control (since that virtue belongs to him in common with his subjects), and, in and through both, justice. Further he must have shown courage (in keeping to his conviction that the welfare of the State is his welfare) in order to become a ruler. Therefore the good ruler, as Aristotle afterwards urged, showing all the four virtues is the same as the absolutely good man.

society made a whole which is perfect, because it is the product and the image of the whole of human mind. As the principle of such a society, it consists in the full discharge by each of these types of the specific function for which, by its capacities and by the place they have given it in the society, it is naturally meant. The justice of the State is the citizen's sense of duty. It is a conscious sense of the duty of a public position issuing in action: England was just at Trafalgar, because her sons who fought under Nelson's signal showed courage in the battle. Such a conception of justice is the final and ultimate death-blow to the individualism in life and in theory which Plato combated. Its essence lies in a view of the individual as no isolated self, but part of an order,—as not intended to pursue the pleasures of that isolated self, but to fill an appointed place in the order. The individual is not a whole, and cannot be treated as such: the State is, and it must enforce upon the individual the fact that it is, by treating him as a factor and a fraction of itself. The conception of the individual as part of an order, although just, is pushed too far by Plato; and in treating of communism we shall see reason to believe that it led Plato to deny to the individual rights, which are the very conditions of his being a moral person and thereby capable of a sense of duty. But the conception of political justice as the filling by each man of his appointed sphere—as a categorical imperative issuing the mandate (in Goethe's words) *Mache ein Organ aus Dir*, is a conception of supreme value for Greek politics, resulting as it did in a view of public duty, and of public efficiency attained by special training, the very reverse of that political selfishness and political ignorance which to Plato characterised Greece. Nor in this connection should Plato's conception of self-control as a virtue of the State pass unnoticed. Like justice, it is a general virtue; and if justice, by keeping each man to his appointed function, involves as its corollary a harmony (a "fitting together" of the different functions), self-control, in the sense in which it has been defined, supplies that corollary, because it knits to one another the rulers and the ruled.¹

As a principle of political justice, the rule τὸ αὐτοῦ πράττειν

¹ Self-control is the motive of the whole State in the *Laws*.

the one virtue proper to the peculiar place which the one pre-
 dominant element in his nature has assigned him—the virtue
 : instance of courage, if “spirit” is the main mark of his
 nper. In another aspect he is an individual soul, and as
 ch he shows justice, if he keeps each of all the elements of
 : soul in its right place, and thereby exhibits all the virtues
 wisdom, and courage, and self-control. If as a citizen, there-
 e, a man may live, as we said, with a third of his mind, as an
 lvidual he lives with the whole. For the individual justice
 the sum of the virtues :

In Justice is all virtue's self compact ;¹

and in this conception of justice the “unity of virtue” appears.

PLATO'S THEORY OF EDUCATION

§ 5. Turning from the justice which is the life-breath of
 the State to the means by which it is to be realised, we find
 two great institutions suggested by Plato. One is a system
 of common education by the State ; the other is a system of
 communism. Both of these are practical proposals, springing
 from the conditions of contemporary politics, and meant for the
 remedy of those evils which Plato detected in existing States :
 both are in reaction against ignorance and selfishness, and both
 make for knowledge and unselfishness. Both flow again from
 the new conception of justice, which should sweep like a new
 spirit of life through a body politic sick almost to death. By
 the teaching of a new education would be given that training
 for a special work, and that instinct for keeping unselfishly to
 the performance, which justice demanded : by the new social
 order of communism time would be gained for the training,
 and temptations to selfishness removed, while above all the
 view of the individual as part of a whole, which is implied in
 the Platonic conception of justice, would find its fulfilment. Of
 the two, [the new education] is greater than the new social order.
 [It is an attempt to touch the evil at its source, and to reform
 the long methods of life by altering the whole outlook on life.] It
 is an attempt to cure a mental malady by mental medicine. In
 this sense Rousseau was right ; and the *Republic* is pre-eminently

A new edu-
 tion pro-
 pounded

¹ Ar., *Eth.*, 1129 b 29.

"the finest treatise on education that ever was written". The new social order is by comparison secondary. It is caution's excess: if spiritual means are not enough—why, then, let us draw upon material reinforcements. Communism is a negative thing. [Education means the bringing of the soul into that environment, which in each stage of its growth is best suited for its development] communism means the abstraction of those elements of environment, which may divert the soul from its growth to alien cares.

Primarily, then, the State which realises justice must be an educational institution. The State is a schoolmaster to bring us to justice. In this conception Plato was definitely and consciously departing from the practice of Athens, and setting his face towards Sparta, as he may also be said to have done in turning to communism. At Athens education was private; and not before the days of the Roman Empire was there any endowment of schools by the State. A law of Solon obliged parents to provide for the education of their boys—(there were no schools, and nothing but domestic education, for girls)—but the keeping of schools was a private venture, which, if we may trust Demosthenes' philippic against Æschines, was not always made by those who were best qualified.¹ Schools may have been controlled and inspected by officials of the State; but even this is not certain. The subjects of education (after reading and writing had been mastered) embraced a literary course in the study and interpretation of the best poets, a gymnastic course in various exercises, and a musical course in lyric poetry with an accompaniment of music. The literary course not only taught taste; but—as the poets were the real religious teachers of Greece, and the priests were sacrificers and not preachers—it also taught religion, and something of ethics. The whole curriculum (which lasted from six to sixteen) would produce a versatile man, who could sing a lyric and accompany himself on the harp, who could quote Homer and Hesiod *à propos*, and was physically as well as mentally developed. If still more than this was desired, there was always the "university" of the Sophists in reserve, where something of a definitely political

¹ Cf. Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* (third edition), s.v. *Ludus Litterarius*.

training might be gained from lectures on rhetoric and politics. In this scheme of education Plato missed, first and foremost, any regular organisation. A matter of supreme importance to the State was left to the chance of individual initiative. What could be more vital to the State—a product of mind—than that the mind, of which it was composed, should have been properly developed? Yet at Athens the State shut its eyes to its first task, while cumbering itself about a mass of administrative detail, which might well have been left to individual judgment, if the individual had once been properly trained. In this respect Sparta had a great lesson to teach. The Spartan youth was taken from his parents at the age of seven, and his education was entrusted to officials of the State. Sparta thus recognised that the State must be the schoolmaster of its citizens; and she recognised yet another truth. She recognised that the aim of education was the development of moral fibre. A definite principle lay behind the training she gave: it was calculated to develop that type of character, which the State¹ required in its citizens as the condition of realising its ideal of itself. It aimed at the development of “spirit” towards a true courage, and it did so because success in war was the object pursued by the State. But though in the organisation of an educational system by the State, and in the conception of a principle (and a moral principle) as the necessary basis of that system, Sparta stood for a model, the narrow scope of her principle made for a narrow curriculum, which at the best produced a limited virtue. Developing only the element of spirit, she employed only physical exercises and such music as would stimulate courage, and she altogether neglected the literary side of education. Many were the Spartans who could not read or write, and few indeed were those who knew the literature of Greece. Here Athens had something to give; and it may therefore be said to be Plato’s aim to combine the curriculum of Athens with the organisation of Sparta, while informing it with a principle higher and wider than that of Sparta—the principle of justice—and continuing it to a later period of life, and into other and nobler studies, than Athens ever contemplated. |

¹ Cf. *infra*, p. 423, for the political aspect of education as also conceived by Aristotle. It involves the view that education is primarily moral, and not intellectual.

er never tries to touch—at any rate, directly: he merely
 ves that it lives, and trusts that it will act. His concern
 environment. That environment he seeks to adjust in
 a way that the spirit, as it looks around, and moves in
 nse to the attraction which it feels for what it sees, may
 around on things beautiful, and move towards the beauty,
 h it sees. Education, in Plato's metaphor, results in the
 ng of the "inward eye" towards the light; and it does so,
 use the teacher sets the light to catch the eye. We may
 of the teacher as "bringing out" the best that is in his
 : more truly, it comes of itself in response to the right
 ts, and it is in setting them before his pupils that the true
 f the teacher lies. In this there may be something of the
 y of "reminiscence" (*ἀνάμνησις*), which is expounded in
Meno: the soul has seen in a former life all things which
 rns in this, and learning is a "remembrance" of that life,
 h flashes to the mind when some facet of an object stirs
 , we may call an association of ideas. The object only gives
 : the soul itself repeats the lines. But everything depends
 e cue; and the environment makes the soul, in the sense
 the soul determines itself by its environment, and assim-
 itself to what it sees. From this view of the influence of
 onment comes the high place which Plato assigns to art
 instrument of education.

Education is thus concerned with the reaction of the soul
 environment. The teacher regulates that reaction by ad-
 g the environment. But this reaction is spiritual life, as
 as the reaction of the body on its food is physical life:
 out it the soul is dead. The soul can no more live without
 for its activities, than can the body; and therefore, so long
 e soul lives, there is need of education to supply the proper
 —to set the right object before the soul for its assimilation
 surround it with its true environment. Education is the
 er of a life-time: a man is being educated so long as he
 pable of a response to each new stimulus with which he
 s in contact, so long as he reacts upon and is refashioned
 s experience. Education does not merely seek to induce
 est that is in the young soul to reveal itself: it occupies
 with age as well as with youth, and seeks to provide for

Education in
 its various
 stages

fulness of an education is in proportion to the fulness of experience which it embraces; and no human mind can be said to have developed to its highest, unless it has developed in every way in which mind has developed in the past. In this past development there is included a political development; and through that, therefore, each individual man, whose face is set towards perfection, must go. The evolution of the soul of every man must resume in itself the evolution of the soul of mankind. This is the spiritual counterpart of the material truth which biology has taught us, that the physical evolution of each human being, from the first germ to the perfect body, resumes the whole of the historical evolution of man. There is accordingly no distinction in Plato between mind practical and mind theoretical, and no confining of education to the latter. Since the whole of mind must be developed, all the practical training and experience which we can acquire is a part of our education. The practical and the theoretical are one: they are both products of mind, and mind must be brought into contact with both. From a political point of view, this teaching once more reaffirms the old identity of the State and man. The State is a product of man's mind, as we saw: it is also, we now learn, one of the necessary elements in the development of his mind. But it must be noticed that in this new conception there is something of a new tone. Man appears less as a part of the State, than the State appears as a part of his experience. There is something of an escape from the State, to a self which is greater than its political experience. And in this way Plato easily glides into a view, which he sometimes betrays, that the best life for man is not the political life, but the life of contemplation, which is the ultimate crown of human development. The political life is but a step towards such an ultimate goal; and if those who have attained that goal must sometimes come back to the State, it is with sad reluctant steps, and eyes ever turning backwards—it is for the service of their fellows, and not for the good of themselves.

The fulness of human experience is therefore the instrument of education. But that experience is not meaningless. It is not a chapter of accidents, but a logical sequence, and it must be seen as such. In Plato there is implicit—what in Aristotle

Education
culminates
the Idea
Good

hought) of mind. This purpose is one and single, because mind is one and single. Action, knowledge, existence—all therefore imply the Idea of the Good; and true action is action in the light of the knowledge that the Good is the reason of all existence.

Education culminates in the realisation of the Idea of the Good. The soul has only then fully adjusted itself to its environment when it has seen the purpose which animates it all. Nor is it the aim of education simply to understand the world in the light of an end: it is also to gain the master-key of conduct and action, since all right conduct and proper action will be conformed and directed to the end which is the end of all things. This is the real sense in which virtue is knowledge. If this conception be personalised, we may say that the end of education is the realisation of God: it is knowing that all things are one in Him, and doing in the light of that knowledge. But this unity of all things in God must not only be realised by the soul in its education. The conception of the Idea of the Good must permeate all the structure of the State. (i.) The State is one of the schemes in which the idea of the Good expresses itself; and the individual must be understood as having a place in this scheme. He must be understood in the light of a purpose which he serves in the plan of the State. This is what we should call an “organic” conception of the State; for a scheme, in the sense in which it has here been used, is an organism. An organism is a unity, where each member is an instrument (or *ὄργανον*) in the general plan; where each member has its appointed purpose or function (*ἔργον*); where each member can only act, and be understood, and indeed exist, through the end and aim of the whole. But such is the unity of the State and such is the relation of the individual to the State: the State is an organism and its citizens are its members.¹ Hence the need of specialisation—each member should serve his purpose in the organism: hence the necessity of justice—for each member should keep to that purpose.² (ii.)

The state and its rulers in relation to the Idea of the Good

¹ This contradicts what was said above of the State as only part of man's experience. But the contradiction is there in Plato, and he alternates unconsciously between an organic and an external conception of the State.

² It should be noticed that the soul itself is an organism, being a scheme of elements each with its place. And as political justice depends on the conception of the State as an organism, so in the individual justice depends on the same conception of the soul.

alities of endurance and courage, a certain habit of "spirit"; and this is its primary aim. Both in its physical and in its moral results, it prepares the soldier for his place in the State. Music is a training of the soul, primarily in its aspect of reason, which, as we saw, is needed to temper and correct mere spirit, but also, and thereby, in its aspect of spirit. As such a training, it is meant to give, not scientific knowledge, but a right opinion. It is meant, as Aristotle would say, to "habituate" the young soul, which is still in the stage of feeling, to feel as it should solve such problems as it has to solve, and in the strength of feeling ingrained by habit to do as it ought to do, without knowing the why and wherefore of its action. That is why artistic media are used. The rhythm and diction of poetry, the sounds of music, the shapes and colours of statuary, appeal to youth in themselves; and if, when they come to youth with their strong appeal, they carry with them a moral message (such as poetry and music and statuary may all convey), they will insensibly steal into the young mind, which accepts them simply for their artistic appeal, a growing love of righteousness. Since the soul is attracted towards its environment, and assimilates itself to its surroundings, it is inevitable that if *they* are instinct with a moral truth, the soul will be imbued with it also.

But if this be so, it is of all things most important that art should always convey a moral message, and never by any chance lend its attraction to anything which youth should not learn to love. It should always bring suggestions of courage and the spirit; it should always carry to the ears of reason whispers of that ultimate Good, which it will one day hear for itself. Accordingly Plato seeks to reform literature, and music, and sculpture in this light. In reforming literature, he deals both with its content and with its form; and while in speaking of the content he suggests a religious reformation, in discussing the form he lays down the first principles of literary criticism and the foundations of Aristotle's *Poetics*. Such a religious reformation was necessary, because the poets who formed the staple of a literary education were also, as we have seen, the religious teachers of Greece; and Plato seeks to re-edit Homer and the dramatists, wherever they have misrepresented the nature of God, in much the same way as a modern reformer might

Moral reform
of Art

Like literature, music¹ must also be submitted to the regimen of the State, if the purity of its moral message is to be reserved. The State must act as a universal critic: it must discern between various instruments, choosing the harp and rejecting the flute; it must limit the modes and the times to the simpler varieties. In respect of music, as of literature, a desire for simplicity in the sense of conformity to one single principle, results in a reactionary spirit; and Plato seems willing to reject many of the products of man's mind, in order that the residue may be purely conformable to the purpose by which man's mind should be animated. He is willing to reform mankind even at the cost of not a little surgery; and this readiness ultimately culminates in a system of communism, in which such products of mind as property and the family are cut away in the name of "purification". The surgery from which it suffers may well seem strange in an artist like Plato; and the rejection of the drama by the author of the dialogue cannot at all appear inconsistent. A believer in "art for art's sake" may readily object, that a false conception of art as serving a moral purpose is responsible for such eccentricity or inconsistency. He may urge that the free play of the artistic impulse is everything, and that art, cabined and confined by the State to a moral purpose, will lose its "appeal," and fail even in carrying a moral message, because it has lost its moving power. Failing to touch the hearer or reader as art, it will fail to reach him as ethics. There is truth in the objection; but we should misconceive Plato, if we believed that he committed himself to a view of art as didactic, when he committed himself to the State-supervision of art. He never conceived of art as a State-messenger, with a budget of moral missives for delivery. Art is not moral to Plato because it tries to convey a lesson external to itself, and only foisted upon it. In itself and for itself it has a lesson which is the essence of its substance. Art is a reflection (*μίμησις*) of life: in it, as in a glass, man sees the world. But life is informed by a principle, and the world is penetrated by a purpose. What is true of the original must

The moral
of Art

¹The same is true of the plastic arts, though little is said of them expressly.

its citizens, but it will not give them medicine; it will give food to their minds by a right system of education, but not drugs; it will be occupied by problems of physiology, and not by those of pathology. In all this there is embedded the Greek conception, that the function of the State is not preventive, but positive—not the removal of hindrances to a good life which must develop from within, but the application of a stimulus to its development. Accordingly, where we conceive the State as legislating for the removal of hindrances (or in other words in order to guarantee rights), where we regard it as interpreting laws by a judicature, and enforcing them by an executive, Plato thought little of laws and less of a judicature, and viewed the State as an executive only. Even the executive is simple: its great and almost its sole organ is the Board of Education.¹ That is to say, its rulers are principally to act by way of enforcing certain great outlines of education, which the primitive legislator had laid down once and for all. The simple problem for the State is to keep those outlines pure; its one task is to allow no revolutions in music and gymnastics. Plato would have recognised a deep truth in the saying, "Let me write the ballads of a country, and I care not who writes the laws";² he would indeed have extended its scope, and made it read, "Let me write the right ballads for a country, and nobody will need to write its laws". A good education in music and gymnastics carries with it everything else: if it has once put the spirit of law in the heart, there is little need for external law which resides in mere "words and letters". Law is a spirit: the law-giver is not the legislator, but the educator who gives the spirit.³ And when once that spirit is there, it will solve all things, and bring all things to remembrance. Once more⁴ we come upon Plato's aversion to written law: once more we come upon the fundamental lesson which he has to teach, that the State is mind, and its institutions ideas. The lesson is true; but the aversion to law is the pushing of a true principle to an extreme application which is untrue.⁵ The spiritual basis of

¹ The same conception underlies Aristotle's ideal State. It is a school—an *Erziehungsanstalt*—principally and primarily; and this is almost the only aspect which Aristotle discusses. ² Cf. *Rep.*, 424 C.

³ Cf. Aristotle, *infra*, pp. 323-24. ⁴ Cf. *supra*, p. 118, and *infra*, p. 167.

⁵ Exactly as his principle that art is moral is a true principle, vitiated by an extreme application when he makes the State enforce the morality of art.

he would have youth trained, during the period of music, in the elements of science. But more important than any external adaptation is the inner and spiritual adaptation of the earlier ~~and artistic~~ to the later and ~~scientific~~ education. Art, we have seen, is the reflection of the purpose of the world to the eyes of conjecture and faith (*πίστις*); and it naturally prepares the way for science to reveal the pure purpose to understanding and pure intelligence. From the first therefore it was the aim of education to turn the eye towards that Idea of the Good, which it is the ultimate purpose of education to reveal. In the first stage, the soul insensibly grew into harmony and sympathy with the Idea, when embodied under the form of Beauty in artistic reflections: in the last, the soul recognises face to face the friend whose image it has so often seen, and with whose being it has itself become instinct.¹ Both as trained in the elements of science, therefore, and as unconsciously instinct with the Idea of the Good, youth is ready at the age of twenty to begin that life-long education, which lifts it by successive stages to the "contemplation" of the pure Idea—to what the middle ages would have called the *Fruitio Dei*. We can only look at these stages so far as they bear on the public life of the citizen of the Republic. First of all, between the age of twenty and that of thirty, those who have proved best during the period of artistic education (and those only) have their understanding developed by a course of science, and are practised in war and all other duties, which the service of the State may require. Secondly, from thirty to thirty-five, a training in dialectic (in "thinking things together" in the light of a principle) is given to those (and again those only) who have shown the greatest ability in the study of science. Next, for a period of fifteen years those who have been proved in science, and trained in dialectic, are to give themselves to the service of the State, commanding in war, holding such offices as are not reserved for age, and generally acquiring political experience. All the time of their service they will be tested and tried, and then those who at the age of fifty have come through every test and trial with credit

¹ For the soul assimilated itself to the Idea of the Good, during the period of its artistic education, because the Idea of the Good was made its environment, and the soul accommodates itself to its surroundings.

hinders his attainment of his end. Plato attempts to reconcile the contradiction. The philosophic nature which develops in the ideal State, till it reaches the contemplation of the Good, has grown not of itself, as it must in ordinary life, but under the fostering care of the State ; it owes a debt for its fostering, and it must repay the debt by guiding the State which has guided its own growth. In this way the State will gain what of all things it may well pray most to have, a ruler who rules wisely indeed, but yet reluctantly, thinking of his office not as a perquisite, but as a duty and a burden to be borne for the good of his fellows.¹ Such a conception of office will mean the absence of political faction and of selfish politics, for it will mean the end of the struggle for office as a source of profit. This is very true ; but it does not really reconcile the philosopher to the State, in any organic sense ; it is only an external reconciliation. He has ascended through the State, and by the experience of a life in the State, to a height where he transcends it. There is something mediæval, it has often been remarked, in the atmosphere of the later books of the *Republic* ; and this element is conspicuously present, in the idea of a reluctant turning from the vision to mix in secular affairs. It is as if a monk were abstracted from the cell of his contemplation to sit on the Papal chair, protesting, yet consenting. Nor is the whole conception of the Platonic ruler, acting by a higher wisdom in the light of the Good, unlike that of the mediæval Pope, ruling as the Vicar of God, and by the power of the Keys, over the communion of the faithful. For the Platonic State too sometimes appears as a monarchy ; it is a State under a king,² we are told ; though generally it is of rulers, rather than a ruler that we hear, and it is in one passage³ definitely called an aristocracy.

COMMUNISM

§ 6. When we turn from the subject of the new education to that of the new social order, we return once more to the organic view of the State. The communism which is peculiar to this new order is indeed still mediæval ; it has its affinities

¹ Cf. Aristotle's account of the ancient view of office (*honor*) as an *onus*, p. 310.

² *Rep.*, 576 E. ³ *Ibid.*, 544 E.

an isolated unit concerned with its own satisfaction. It is his ^{Comm} aim to substitute a conception of the self as part of an order, ^{necess} ^{the ru} ^{reason} and as finding its satisfaction in filling its place in that order. This conception, we saw, is expressed under the name of Justice, and it means that each man should do one special work truly and thoroughly, and that no man should selfishly and aggressively trespass on the province of his neighbour. Now communism is to Plato the necessary result of this conception of justice. Two of the three classes of his ideal State—the rulers and the soldiers—must, if they are to do their work truly, and to keep to it unselfishly, live under a *régime* of communism. They must not work with the part of their soul which is desire, if they are to devote themselves to the perfecting of their proper elements of spirit and reason; and they must therefore abnegate the economic side of life which is the outward expression of desire. If they threw themselves into that life, they would hamper the operation of the proper elements of their soul, both by letting them fall into disuse, and by indulging an element of the soul which is hostile to them. Accordingly, it appears that a communistic life, in the sense of a life divested of the economic motive, is necessarily connected with, and issues from, the supremacy in the State of the proper elements of mind, and particularly of the element of reason. Communism is postulated by the rule of the philosophic nature, in which reason is dominant. Without communism reason would either be dormant (while desire acted, and busied itself with acquisition) or, even when it acted, it would be troubled in its action by desire, which would tend to make it act for selfish ends. Not only is communism necessary to reason, but reason issues in communism. Reason means unselfishness: it means that the man whom it animates abnegates mere self-satisfaction as his aim, and throws himself into the welfare of a larger whole. And it means this because, in virtue of it, the philosophic temper realises the world as a scheme ordered towards the Idea of the Good, and recognises the State as a scheme within that scheme, and the individual as in turn a part of that scheme. Through reason the ruler sees that he is an “organ” of the State, and that away all the element of desire, since what an organ of the State is pure reason.

modern communism in his ideal aim, Plato is therefore unlike it also in his scope; and paradoxically enough, as it may appear to a modern mind, he invents a system of communism which has nothing at all to do with the economic structure of society—which leaves an individualistic system of production still standing, and does not touch a single producer. It must indeed appear a strange communism to any modern communist; for it is a communism in which, limited as are the divisors, the dividend is still less. The guardians to whom the system applies are distinguished from the rest of the State by sharing in a common poverty, like a body of Franciscan friars. Property they have none. Neither individually nor collectively do they own a single acre: the land and its products are in the hands of the third estate of farmers.¹ They have no houses: they live in common barracks, which are always open and public. But on what, then, do they live? On a salary paid in kind by the farming classes according to a regular assessment, a salary paid year by year, and consisting of such necessities as will suffice for the year. These necessities are not divided among the guardians for private consumption: they are to be consumed at common tables. Here, as in the idea of a “training” to be given by the State to qualify its citizens for their work, appears the influence of Sparta upon Plato. These common tables are a Spartan institution, somewhat reformed. Instead of contribution being made to the common mess by each citizen individually, as was the case at Sparta, the tables are maintained by the State from the taxes² paid by the landed class. The system in general has from one point of view a very modern aspect. Its object may be said to be the substitution of a professional administration supported by a system of regular taxation, in lieu of an unprofessional and unpaid government supporting itself by speculation. It is a political object, such as has been

Communism
of property
its scope and
character

of pan-Hellenic feeling which does not stand alone in the *Republic*, and is also indicated in the conception of the oracle of Delphi as spiritual centre of Greece).

¹ Aristotle misrepresents Plato, when he discusses common ownership of land as if it were a Platonic idea.

² State-provision for the common tables was actually made in Crete. Apart from the common tables, there were some definite traces of communism at Sparta: a Spartan might use the goods of another Spartan with some freedom (cf. *Ar., Pol.*, ii., 1263 a 35).

is this objection properly valid, upon any true conception of the meaning of individuality.

But Plato's scheme embraces not only communism of property ; it also contemplates communism of wives ; and here, it may be said, a vital difference is obvious between modern aims and those of Plato. The difference may be doubted. Communism of wives in the sense in which it was advocated by Plato, may be understood most easily in its negative aspect, and as meaning the abolition of the family. From this point of view it may be doubted whether, if socialism had its day, the zeal of regulation and the passion of unity might not lead men to "reform" the independence of the family out of existence. There is a law which is very true of human affairs, that actions and reforms intended to achieve one result must as a matter of fact involve many and sometimes unexpected results in addition ; and this is a law which must be especially true of a great reform like socialism. But whether or no the abolition of the family would be proved by the logic of events to result from the aims of modern socialism, it seemed to Plato to follow logically upon the aim which he proposed to himself. He wished the rulers of his ideal State to be troubled neither by distractions from their work, nor by temptations to self-interest. He had deprived them of property, since its care was a distraction, and the desire to gain it was a temptation. ~~But his aim was only half-achieved with the abolition of property.~~ The family postulates property for its maintenance : it is a distraction from the genuine work of a man's life ;¹ it is a temptation to throw oneself into self-seeking, which seems almost something noble, when it is disguised under the garb of a father's anxiety for the "future" of his children.

To Plato the "home," which is so precious to us, was anathema. "Every Englishman's house is his castle," we say. "Pull down the walls," Plato replies : "they shelter at best a restricted family feeling : they harbour at the worst avarice and ignorance. Pull down the walls, and let the free air of a common life blow over the place where they have been." For the ruler

¹ Cf. Zola's saying : "On donne sa virilité à son œuvre". The celibacy of the clergy, formally based on the conception that the priest has married his Church, and can have no other wife, is really based on this principle.

guided before, by an analogy. He had compared the guardians—to watch-dogs in an earlier passage; and he now suggests that, after all, dogs of either sex can do the work of watching, with the one difference, that the female is somewhat weaker than the male. Against the application of the lesson which this analogy has to teach, it may be urged that there is a vital difference of nature and almost of kind between man and woman. Plato denies the difference: if woman differs from man in sexual function, she is in all the other functions of life a weaker man, possessed of the same capacities but not of the same strength. It is absurd, he argues, to make a distinction in one function the ground for a distinction in all; and he therefore assigns the same training and the same duties to men and to women alike—within the circle of the guardians.¹ Here again, as in the institution of “common tables,” the influence of Sparta is obvious. The Spartan girl was trained in gymnastics like the man; and Plato adopts the Spartan practice, while pushing it to its logical conclusion, and insisting that women, since they have been trained like men by the State, shall also serve it like men. For Plato is not a teacher of woman’s rights so much as of woman’s duties; and if he aims at emancipating women from the bondage of the household, it is only in order to subject them again to the service of the community at large. Yet such service is true freedom; in it woman stands by man’s side as his yoke-fellow in the fulness of his life, and by it she attains the fulness of her own; nor must we, in speaking of Plato as the teacher of woman’s duties, forget that he is, especially for a Greek, amazingly liberal in his attitude towards women.

But how is this scheme, which devotes woman to the service of the State, to be reconciled with the physical necessity of continuing the species? How can marriage, and the bearing and rearing of children, be dovetailed into a plan, which rejects the family, and (apparently) unsexes the woman? Let us suppose for a moment that monogamy were still to be practised. The men-guardians, living in common and open barracks, have no place to which they can bring a wife: the women-guardians, living the same life and in the same way, can make no home

Plato's scheme
of marriage

¹ The producing classes retain home and family, as they retain private property.

gain".¹ In other words, a body has attained solidarity, when its members have so entirely identified themselves with the whole, that whatever happens to any part of the whole is felt by each member as happening to himself. Now such a perfect solidarity seemed to Plato to characterise a circle of relations.² To make the State into a circle of relations will therefore tend to its unity, and so to its good. And thus the State is brought, according to Plato's desire, as near to the unity of the individual man as may be: if it has not become a single individual, it has at any rate become a single family. The political bond which unites citizen to citizen, has been strengthened by the tie of kinship and sentiment, which unites brother to brother: the warmth of domestic affection has reinforced the feeling of political fellowship.³ The new city, which Plato's imagination has compacted, is the home of its citizens, who know no other; it is their "fatherland," in deed as well as in word. The children who are born within it are all "children of the State," reared as it were in a *crèche*, and under the care of public nurses, until they are ripe for education.

§ 7. By this new regulation of the relations of the sexes, Plato thus hopes to achieve many things—freedom for man and woman to develop their highest capacities, and to exercise them together as true comrades in their proper work; better-

¹ It is from this passage that Aristotle derives his opinion, that Plato aims at "excessive unification". The unity which makes every citizen say the same thing at the same time reminds one of the unity of the educational system, which allowed the minister of education to take his watch out of his pocket and say: "At this minute all the children of this country are saying—X". Plato it is true goes further: they must all say X with the same meaning, and in the same spirit. It is an internal and real, not a formal unity, which he postulates; but it is equally over-driven.

² One may argue that this is a singularly optimistic view of the relations of relatives. "Blood may be thicker than water, but the skin of kinship is proverbially thin." But granting that it is true, and assuming that solidarity so perfect characterises a family, surely the family has a *raison d'être*—it attains a "good". Plato is therefore contradicting himself at this point. At any rate he is guilty, as Aristotle remarks, of the logical fallacy of supposing that what is true of a small circle of relations will be true of a large circle of men, if they are related. This is a logical fallacy, because there are two factors, (1) a small circle, and (2) relationship; and Plato leaves out of account the influence of the first of these in producing solidarity.

³ Thus Herodotus tells us that community of wives is practised among the Agathyrsi in order to make brothers of the tribesmen, and to banish hatred and ill-will (Hdt., iv., 104, quoted in Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, ii., 119).

the defender of marriage, that Plato should make his State a breeding establishment for the production of fine animals.¹

Under the whole scheme of communism, whether in property or in wives—underneath the whole attempt to abolish private possession and private life—there lies the assumption, that much can be done to abolish spiritual evils by the abolition of those material conditions in connection with which they are found. Spiritual medicines, it must always be remembered, ^{Plato's asceticism} are the first and primary cure in Plato's therapeutics; but a ruthless surgery of material things is also a necessary condition. Because material conditions are *concomitant* with spiritual evils, they seem to him largely their cause; and since to abolish the cause is to abolish the effect, he sets himself to a thorough reform of the material conditions of life. By compelling men to live under absolutely different conditions in the material and external organisation of their lives, he hoped to produce a totally different spirit and an utterly different attitude of mind. The gist of Aristotle's criticism of this conception is simple: spiritual medicines are all that one needs, or can use, for spiritual diseases. Educate a man to the truth, and by the truth that is in him he will connect the very same material conditions, which were before connected with evil, with everything that is good. Material conditions are concomitants, not causes; occasions, and not reasons; and it is idle to tinker with occasions. It is more than idle: it is corrupting and enfeebling. To free men from drudgery is not necessarily to make them live the free life of the spirit; and one may doubt whether the drudgery in which the lives of nearly all of us are cast is not as much of a moral training as it is of a material necessity, and whether its disappearance would not involve the "life of swine," rather than that of "Olympic victors," as Plato prefers to think. And is it not everywhere true, that to take away occasions of stumbling is to produce a weak-kneed godliness—that to shelter the

¹ At the same time it should be noticed that the conditions of Greek life to some extent explain what has been called the unreal abstraction of the sexual motive in respect of the relations of man and woman. The woman who abode in her quarters all the day, and the man who spent his day in the agora or the palaestra, had little in common; and the Greek vice of *παῖδαρρία* meant that, as between men and women, there was little of what we should call "falling in love".

ducts of *right* mind, of mind acting in view of a true end and by appropriate means? Error may become inveterate as well as truth; and it has often been seen that the suggestions of some powerful intelligence, when backed by the influence of a strong will and an attractive personality, may enter into the life of a whole people without real examination or discussion. The historian sees that they have entered and established themselves, and he readily believes in their sanctity, and accuses those who aim at their destruction of the want of a proper historical sense, and of forgetting that "the roots of the present lie deep in the past". None the less the philosopher has the right to inquire *how* they came, and to ask by *what* title they exist, and *what* element of mind they express; and if he is dissatisfied with the answer which he receives, he has every right to suggest, what *should* have come instead, what has a *real* title to exist, what element of mind *ought* to be expressed. But history deserves some respect, and Plato pays it little. He rejects the whole of its developments as so many mistakes, and substitutes in their place his own ideas of what ought to be. Aristotle's criticism is shrewd and dry. "We must not forget that we ought to attend to the length of past time and the witness of bygone years, wherein it would not have escaped men's notice, if these things had been right and proper." But, to tell the truth, Plato's ideas of "what ought to be" are not so much the undiscovered novelties of latter days, as the most primitive antiquities of the remote past. We spoke of an element of reaction: we might almost have spoken of atavism, and recurrence to the savage. In music, in medicine, in the reconstruction of society, this trait is prominent. The "luxurious" State is in his eyes suffering from a "fever": it needs a letting of blood, a purification. It must be brought back to simplicity, by which Plato means that the superfluous elements, which are not conformable to the spirit of justice, must be excised in order that the whole may attain to conformity. Back to simplicity it is accordingly brought, but the simplicity which is gained proves in the issue to be the simplicity of the primitive; and Plato falls into the ordinary error of finding the path of progress in the way of retrogression—the error which Bacon rebuked in the saying, "*Antiquitas sæculi juvenus mundi*". It is a case of a true

of "Nature". Here as elsewhere Plato is the debtor, as well as the enemy, of the Sophists ; although it must be remembered, that while the Sophist had found in primitive customs the means of dispensing with the State, which lost its *raison d'être* when it was no longer needed for the sanction of marriage and the guarantee of property, Plato used them for the stays and supports of an ideal State still more to be abhorred by every Sophist than the actual, because stronger and more disposed to interfere. Yet in the very conception of the unity of this ideal State there is a latent barbarism : it is a clan, knit together by the bond of blood. It seems easy to accuse Plato of an anachronism, or rather of an inversion of history ; and to argue that he begins by tracing the unity of the State to the sense of economic interest, which is its final and conscious bond, and ends by making that unity depend on the sentimental tie of kinship, which is its first rude and unconscious form. And while such an argument would be in so far mistaken, as Plato begins logically, and not historically, with the economic motive, the accusation would at any rate have this truth, that the return to the clan does betray a certain want of historical perspective.¹

One final point of view remains to be raised with regard to Plato's communism. Does it, or does it not, destroy individuality? Is it compatible with the preservation of the rights of individuals? Does not Plato deny liberty in the name of fraternity (as he also sacrifices equality in the name of efficiency) when he institutes a philosophic despotism? It is certainly Plato's aim to destroy individuality of the false kind, to abolish individual "rights" as construed in the proposition "might is

Relation of
communism
to persons

¹ This want of historical perspective was natural to a Greek inquirer. Instead of seeing in the present the fruit of the conditions and circumstances of the present, and in the past the fruit of those which reigned in the past ; instead, again, of seeing this present linked to that past by the chains of a natural development, he saw, in both present and past, things possible at either time, and in neither any necessary connection with the other. He ignored at once the causation which connects the present with its environment, and that which binds it to the past. He referred the happening of the past in a past age, the being of the present in the present, to the fiat of the State, the will of the legislator. The modern "historic" sense, which corrects this point of view, is less the product of history than of science and the scientific theory of evolution ; and Aristotle, who had the idea of development, shows the historic sense in his account of the growth of the State, and in his view of the growth of knowledge.

be "Live in as wide a fellowship as you may, and have fellowship in as many interests as you can".¹

Liberty then need not be sacrificed to gain fraternity: on the contrary, through fraternity man comes by the fullest and therefore freest use of his powers. No rights are destroyed when the individual is made part of a community: rights belong to the individual as a member of a community, and are the conditions of his action as a member, secured to him by the community. The teleological conception is "the foundation for all true theory of rights,"² because it involves this conception of the individual as a member of the community, acting for its end, and guaranteed the conditions of such action. That no sacrifice of the individual, or of liberty, or of rights, was involved by his philosophy Plato felt sure; and he argued the point under the rubric of happiness. He urged that his guardians were "happy," or enjoyed the sense of free and full play of their individuality which the Greek termed *εὐδαιμονία*, by acting in their appointed place in the State. "In a proper State," he tells us, "the individual will himself expand, and he will secure the common interest along with his own," because he has made it his own (497 A). Where, then, is the error of Plato's communism, in respect of its attitude to the individual? Granted that Plato has a true conception of the meaning of individuality, and a true conception of rights¹ (as the conditions of the free activity of the individual considered as a member of society), is there not some flaw in his reasoning? He starts from right principles: may there not be here as elsewhere defects in their application? There would appear to be two. In the first place, while it is true that the self should grow and spread forth its branches, it is also true that it must have a root. A wide extension of interests may be desirable; but such an extension

Plato destroys
the basis of
personality

¹ "Forsooth, brothers, fellowship is heaven, and the lack of fellowship is hell: fellowship is life, and the lack of fellowship is death: and the deeds that ye do upon the earth, it is for fellowship's sake that ye do them, and the life that is in it shall live on and on for ever, and each one of you part of it, while many a man's life upon the earth from the earth shall wane" (William Morris, *A Dream of John Ball*). "To be no part of any body is to be nothing: and so I am, and shall so judge myself, unless I could be so incorporated into a part of the world, as by business to contribute some sustentation to the whole" (Donne, in a letter quoted in *Walton's Life*).

² Green, *Principles of Political Obligation*, p. 57, § 39; cf. *infra*, p. 225.

fellowship (*κοινωνία*), "and each one of us part of it"; it is also true that it is a fellowship of fellowships (*κοινωνία συνων*), and each one of us part of those—which is the great point that Aristotle teaches. It is true again that the State is a product of mind—that it is mind concrete in an external organisation: it is not true that the unity of the State is as the unity of a single mind, or that mind must be concrete in a single organisation, the "Republic one and indivisible".

The meaning and the bearing of the line of criticism here suggested may be realised more clearly, if we place ourselves at the point of view suggested by Plato himself, and regard the State as an organism—that is to say, as a whole of which the parts are organs for the attainment of a single end. Of such a whole, as the human body, whose members are all organs for the purpose of life, has generally been taken as a type. Now the application of the category of organism to the State is necessary and

Organic theory
of the State

It is necessary, because it gives a true idea of the kind of unity which exists in the State: it is necessary, because it is an antidote to a false idea of the unity of the State, as legal in its essence, and contractual in its form. Modern political thought has borrowed from biology an organic conception of the State, which it has opposed to the legal conception of a contract maintained by thinkers like Hobbes and Locke, exactly as Aristotle drew from his teleology a similar conception, and opposed it to the "conventional" view of the Sophists. The emphasis which is now laid, as it was also laid by Plato, upon the organic character of the State, is just and salutary. A contract-conception degrades the State into a business partnership (*etats*), whose members are linked by a purely voluntary tie of self-interest. They have put as it were their money into a common urn which they have called the State, because they thought it would pay; and if they find that it fails to pay—as the Sophists argued that it failed to pay the "strong" man—they can and will withdraw from the concern.¹ The organic theory, on the contrary, substitutes a vital for a voluntary tie.

Compare Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution*: "The State ought not to be considered as nothing better than a partnership agreement in a share of pepper or coffee, calico or tobacco, or some such other low concern, to be taken up for a little temporary interest and to be dissolved by the fancy of the parties".

with that will the demand for its expression, and with that demand a right to private property, as a necessary subject upon and through which expression can take place. In the second place, the State is an organism whose parts are also members of other organisms. They are members for instance of the family, and the family is an organism whose end may be subsidiary but cannot be sacrificed to that of the State. Any organism which satisfies a vital necessity of human nature, like the family, must be indestructible, however detrimental to the organic unity of the State it may at first sight appear. But the zeal of the State had come upon Plato, and had come as a fire to consume whatever was not of the State.¹ A fire will not stop at exceptions; and these exceptions to the organic unity of the State he could not brook. Nor is this attitude of mind peculiar to Plato or to theory: it has, at different periods of the world's history, played a great part in the actual life of mankind. The conception of the State as the sole organism, to whose majesty all other organisms must be sacrificed, is characteristic of the sixteenth century, and of much of the French Revolution. It may seem eccentric to speak of the Reformation as Platonic; but in one of its aspects the Reformation was part of a general movement for State centralisation, which made for the destruction or utter subjection of all organisations other than that of the State. It is a movement which is expressed in Luther, as well as in Machiavelli, who are both its apostles.² In part that movement attacked the organisation of the Church (in a natural attempt to revenge itself upon the Church for its attempt to engulf the State, in the days of Gregory VII., Innocent III. and Boniface VIII.): in part it attacked old mediæval organisations of shire and hundred, as in

¹ In this respect Plato was true to the spirit of Sparta, where "associations intermediate between the State and the individual were either lacking, or had become mere expedients of mechanical subdivision". It was otherwise in Athens; and Aristotle, as we shall see, was true to Athens. Here there was the full life of the deme, and of the household: there were clans and phratries and tribes with common property and common worships. These associations were at once homes of individuality, and the basis of a healthy liberty. For the local opinion of self-governing units is a necessary basis for the general government of the State by public opinion (*cf.* Mommsen, ii., 40).

² Treitschke.

in the heavens for an ensample,"¹ elsewhere he thinks that what he has sketched is "no vision, but possible if difficult of accomplishment".² And thus, it would appear, there is a certain oscillation between a practical attempt at construction, and the theoretical exhibition of a State based on ideal principles. It would be unjust, on the strength of this oscillation, to criticise Plato as though he had meant the whole of his scheme to be realised. But it is not unjust to criticise the theoretical exhibition of a State based on ideal principles, upon the ground that those principles are in their application pushed to an excess. And this is the line of criticism which we have attempted to take. Plato, as we have seen, had seized upon those principles, which are and always have been the fundamental principles of every State. He saw that the State is a product of mind: he saw that it is an organic unity. But, in the process of application, he pushed these principles to conclusions with which it is impossible to agree. If the State is a product of mind, it ought not therefore to be separated into three elements, nor should it be guided towards a purpose higher than it has grasped by the wisdom of one of these. If its unity is organic, that does not mean that the family must be abolished, or property destroyed. The tyranny of principles carries Plato too far. He speaks of a stage in the development of reason, when conscious of its powers it uses them as it were in play, for the purpose of contradicting everything, like a young puppy which fleshes its teeth by indiscriminate tearing and rending. It is a stage which one may perhaps detect in the Sophists: they were the wandering "puppies" of dialectic, barking at conventions, and delighting in contradictions. But Plato had himself attained to a stage, when reason is still more masterful, and almost equally destructive. He had risen above contradiction to the eternal verity; and in the strength of his hold upon it he was too eager to enforce it upon the world for its salvation. He did not sufficiently recognise that the eternal verity had been working throughout history, if not consciously realised by man: he was too anxious to make its conscious realisation by the philosopher into a ground for attacking all its past works. Not only so, but with a stern logic he would have enforced truth

Plato and the
tyranny of
reason

¹ 592 B. ² 540 D.

but he had left them out of his scheme none the less. His State has some of the features of a despotism; nor would it have been any the less galling in practice, because it was the despotism of an idea. And while we may admit that even Aristotle allows his teleology to justify slavery, and to exclude labour from participation in political life, we must also admit the wide and almost democratic scope of his ideal State.

NOTE.—In the *Timæus* and *Critias* Plato writes, as it were, an Epilogue to the *Republic*. In the former dialogue there is a brief recapitulation of the *Republic*, and a promise to show the State of the *Republic* engaged in action: in the *Critias*—which is a fragment—a beginning of the fulfilment of the promise is made. Apparently Plato wished to justify his ideal State by its fruits; he sought to show how in action its excellence would have issued in great deeds, and—conversely—to prove from those great deeds the greatness of its excellence. Apparently he also wished to justify his ideal State still further, by suggesting that the oldest history of Athens dimly revealed a polity like that of the *Republic*. For before the deluge Athens “performed the noblest deeds and had the fairest constitution of any of which tradition tells”: she had a system of specialised classes, and especially a warrior class distinct from the other classes, and devoted purely to war: the castes of Egypt were simply an imitation of Athens. The Athenian warriors dwelt by themselves, with a suitable education, a system of communism, and payments in food from the other citizens. Military pursuits were common to men and women, as the statue of Athene in full armour testified. The ideal of the *Republic* is therefore a looking backward to the “ancestral constitution” of primæval Athens: primæval Athens and the State of the *Republic* are one (*Timæus*, 25 E). In telling the story of ancient Athens engaged in action (as it was when it overthrew the power of Atlantis), Plato thinks, therefore, that he will really be showing the State of the *Republic* in action (26 D). But in the *Critias* he does no more than sketch the scenery. We are shown Athens and its Acropolis; we see the warriors living on the summit of the Acropolis, round the temples, in an enclosure like the garden of a house; we see the husbandmen and artisans living outside the Acropolis and under its sides; we see the State of Atlantis, a sort of primitive Babylon, a vast island, intersected by alternate zones of land and sea, with chariots and horsemen, and “temples covered with silver, and their pinnacles with gold, and their roofs of ivory,” and grandeur unspeakable as of Incas or Aztecs. But with these two pictures the story ends. The action never comes.

CHAPTER IV

PLATO'S VIEW OF MONARCHY, AND OF THE MIXED STATE

THE ABSOLUTE MONARCH

§ 1. **T**HE government of the city depicted in the *Republic* represents, it was urged in the last chapter, the despotism of the Idea: it is an ideocracy. That despotism, we have seen, presents itself to Plato in two external aspects—as an aristocracy, and as a monarchy. It seems natural for many reasons to believe that Plato regarded aristocracy as the ideal form of government. He belonged to an aristocratic coterie; and, like the other young aristocrats who gathered round Socrates, he might easily interpret the Socratic doctrine of the necessity of knowledge in the rulers of a State as a philosophic defence of aristocracy. He might learn from the history of Pythagoreanism that a philosophical circle had once governed Croton; and it was easy for him to hope that a “new” aristocracy, composed not of the members of a political club, but of disciples of a philosophical circle like his own, might regenerate Greece. Yet natural as it would appear to regard aristocracy as Plato's ideal, there seems reason to believe that it was monarchy which claimed his allegiance. A famous sentence of the *Republic* tells us, that there will be no rest from their troubles for the cities of Greece or for all mankind, until the days of philosopher kings;¹ and from the *Politicus* we also learn the necessity of ideal and absolute monarchy. Here again, as in

¹ Here we see Socratic intellectualism making for absolute enlightened monarchy, to the neglect of popular will. As McKenzie says (*Int. Journ. Ethics*, Jan., 1906, p. 144): “If a real philosopher were made king his first act would probably be to abdicate his office, or at least to secure as rapidly as possible that the real work of government was distributed among the competent members of the State”. A true philosophy must recognise the element of will.

tradition of cherished opinions and current beliefs. Constitutionalism meant much to the Greeks: they hated the tyrant because he defied it, and because he ruled by his own caprice, boasting, like Richard II., that "the laws were in his own mouth and often in his own breast".¹ The conception of the State as an association of equals was dear to them; and the rule of a single man, tyrant or king, contradicted this conception. But Plato attacks constitutionalism, and thinks but little of equality.

To equality he opposed harmony, to constitutionalism flexibility, and in the name of both he advocates absolute monarchy. In The monarch as making for harmony

a fine passage at the end of the *Politicus* the function of the monarch in binding the State together to the exclusion of selfishness and consequent disunion is emphasised by means of a parallel between statesmanship and weaving. It is the royal art to weave a State of one texture from the warp of courage and the woof of temperance: it is the work of a statesman to bind his State into a unity by the divine bond of a true moral sense, and by the human bond of properly regulated marriage.²

As a power making for harmony monarchy has still its advocates in German thinkers, and among Positivists. The former discern in a monarch the proper representative of the authority of the "State," who will secure its independence of, and its control over, the various motives and classes of "Society": the latter, struck by the incompetency of the ruling classes, and by the want of political ability which the other classes betray, place their hopes in a dictatorial power, "sufficiently representing the interests of the classes that are growing, and at the same time strong enough to protect the weaker and decaying—a power able to act as a mediator". Such a Cæsarian power "wielding the whole executive power; owning no constitutional check; not the theoretic, but the actual head of the State, securing unity to its policy," would form "the highest function of society, and must not be entrusted to incapable hands". It is, however, only a provisional power, "to satisfy the wants of a transitional state";

¹ Euripides speaks of tyranny as a constitution "in which there are no common laws, and one man rules, who has the law in his own keeping" (*Supplikes*, 430-32).

² Plato refers to the education, and the communism of wives, which appear in the *Republic*.

response to the will of the people: he attains flexibility in *his* sense at the cost of any flexibility in *our* sense.¹ This is one criticism which we may pass: the other is, that he was too much afraid of the rigidity of law. True, there was among the Greeks little of that sense of law as a progressive development which is universally felt to-day. Law was a formed body of precepts rather than a living growth: Greek States valued the law-abiding instinct (*εὐνομία*) which came from adherence to a fixed code, and they were afraid, just as Aristotle shows himself afraid in the *Politics*, of any innovation.² They had something of the mediæval feeling for law as a permanent customary envelopment, in deference to which a reformer like Frederic II. had to explain, that "in nothing do we derogate from the majesty of our ancestors, if we bring forward new laws to suit the needs of new occasions". The modern instinct for progressive legislation, which leads men to expect even a "conservative" government to reform some great department of political life during its tenure of office, is in reality very modern, and in England it can only be said to date from that great epoch of political, administrative, and legislative reconstruction—the reign of William IV.³ But in any case, we have little reason to fear the rigidity of law (though it may be argued that even to-day there is much rigidity still frost-bound into our law); and possessed as we are of an actively reforming legislature, the like of which even Athens did not know,⁴ and of a judicial bench which can modify law to suit new cases even while it seems to preserve ancient law, we can hardly appreciate Plato's position. In the absence, however, of forces such as these, it seems possible that law may become rigid, and that injustice may be done; and to that extent there is in his position an obvious truth. On the other hand, one gathers from Aristotle's criticism that there *was* in

¹ Plato's flexible absolutism, free as it is from any control by the people, is rigid in our sense of the word; his rigid law-state, controlled as it is by law, more nearly approaches our idea of flexibility.

² Cf. *infra*, pp. 325-26.

³ Perhaps it was the belated influence of the French Revolution which led to the passing of a Reform Bill, a New Poor Law, a Municipal Corporations Act, and to the reform of the land-law and the beginning of a system of national education, in the seven years between 1830 and 1837.

⁴ Cf. *infra*, p. 456.

But Euclid postulates the one, and Plato and Aristotle postulate the other, as the condition of sciences, which are none the less sciences because they proceed on the assumption of something "unreal," and indeed are only sciences because they proceed on such an assumption.¹

Taking the State sketched in the *Republic* for standard, and its principles for clues, we can see the meaning and the value of existing States. "This State is what it is, because it has not observed the principle of knowledge: this State is better than that, because it comes nearer to the standard of the ideal." We can classify, and not only so, but we can classify in a scale of values. Such classification, based as it is on a principle, differs from most of the previous attempts at classification made in Greece. Herodotus in a famous passage² had made the Persian grandees contrast monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy in respect of their value; and he had impartially pronounced that they all suffered from evils, which in each case ultimately involved a tyranny. Democracy at its best, he tells us, means equality before the law, an elective and responsible executive, and the right of the people to exercise deliberative power. But the people do not know, for they have never been taught, what is fitting and proper; they can be more tyrannical than the worst tyrant in their ignorant caprice; and their incapacity permits a public corruption, which provokes ultimately a revolt of the masses led by a champion who becomes a tyrant.³ Aristocracy means the predominance of good birth and breeding; but the members of an aristocracy are touchy on the point of honour, and quarrels easily arise which develop into civil war, and culminate in tyranny. Monarchy again at its best means due regard to the welfare of the whole State, and capable conduct of foreign policy; but the monarch is liable to the intoxication of power, and falling into insolence and a jealousy of all merit, he becomes a tyrant. While Herodotus thus condemns

¹ Green's *Principles of Political Obligation* goes on the assumption that "the State is based on will, not force". The assumption is "unreal," it may be urged; and Ireland and Russia may be cited. But we can only understand the meaning of the State in the light of this assumption.

² III., 80-82.

³ Compare the revolts, aiming at escape from corruption, and culminating in the Caesarism of a mayor, which have occurred in American cities of late years.

and guiding principle of classification; and in the light of the State and the form of government which represent perfect knowledge, he classifies all other States and constitutions. In virtue of this principle he makes three grades of States—the State of perfect knowledge perfectly free to act; the States of imperfect knowledge formalised in a law, which only act where that law can act; and the States of ignorance, which refuse to be guided even by the imperfect and hard “knowledge” of a code of law. Excluding the perfect State, or absolute monarchy, “as if it were a god”—leaving the ideal, which is our standard, and concentrating our attention upon the actual, we have therefore two great divisions of existing States. There are the law-states, and there are the caprice-states—the States which obey the law, under which they are set in lieu of the rule of perfect knowledge, and the States which disobey that law. Either of these may be subdivided according to a principle of number, and as the rulers are one or few or many; and in this way we attain the following scheme.

I

[Outside and above any scheme, the perfect State of perfect knowledge freed from the impediment of law—the ideal State of the *Republic*.]

Law-states, directed by a knowledge expressed in law, by which they faithfully act:—

- i. The rule of one, or “constitutional” (as opposed to absolute) monarchy.
- ii. The rule of few, or aristocracy.
- iii. The rule of many, or democracy of a moderate and “constitutional” kind.

II

Caprice-states, which disobey the law in which the knowledge that should guide them is expressed:—

- i. The rule of one, or tyranny.—
- ii. The rule of few, or oligarchy.—
- iii. The rule of many, or “extreme” democracy.—

Of the six constitutions which thus emerge, Plato places monarchy first, and tyranny last; the rule of a single man is

me, but in order of importance, so we now witness a destruction of the State, in which each psychological factor is "successively" taken away, again in order of importance. As the factor of reason was last added in construction, so in destruction it is the first to be taken away: stage by stage, the State is made to depend on fewer and worse psychological factors, until in tyranny it depends only on desire, and the worst element of desire. But while we repudiate any historical meaning for this sketch, we must not deny its historical bearing. These books have been called the first attempt at a philosophy of history: ¹ if they are not history, they explain history, and show *why* history is a record, not of the perfect "idea" of the State, but of its various and successive perversions. They show, that is to say, that history has not been made by the full mind of man, acting in the proper hierarchy of its parts, but created as it were by fragments of mind. And again, it is certainly implied in Plato that the ideal State, considered as existing *in rerum natura*, is subject to laws of historical mutation. It knows a process of growth and of increase; ² nor, on the other hand, is it exempt from a law of decay, which leads to its final collapse.³ A law of deterioration, such as is visible in plants, equally affects man; and an inferior progeny will in the course of time produce an inferior state.⁴ It is therefore implied by Plato that the ideal State will change, and, if it changes by a logical series of stages, will change in the way which he suggests. Aristotle criticises Plato from a historical point of view, and urges that, as a matter of fact, constitutions do not alter in the sequence Plato describes: oligarchy does not always pass into democracy, and democracy into tyranny; in actual life, a democracy will pass into an oligarchy as readily as into a tyranny. The answer to this criticism is, partly that it is beside the mark, for Plato was not writing history or generalising from history; partly that, even from a historical point of view, Plato's sequence may be vindicated,

¹ Nettleship, *Lectures*, p. 299. ² *Rep.*, 424 A. ³ *Ibid.*, 546.

⁴ Plato implies something like what Horace says:

"Aetas parentum pejor avis tulit
Nos nequiores, mox daturos
Progeniem vitiosiore."

on the other hand he also believes

"Fortes creantur fortibus et bonis,"

and in the strength of that belief attempts to regulate marriage.

pursuit of wealth, has only done so, because the money-getting type has become the approved type of character in that State, and has made the "national character" one of avarice. But if constitutions thus originate in, as well as correspond to, national character (the very lesson which Montesquieu afterwards taught), was not the hope of political salvation to be found in an education of character, such as Plato advocated and sketched—and in nothing else? To show, therefore, as Plato showed, the vital connection between corrupt States and corruption of character, was to indicate the one path of any real reform of the actual (and corrupt) state of Greece. In this respect Plato is far more radical than Aristotle in his therapeutics: he prescribes a radical change of the whole scheme of life, whereas Aristotle (in books vi. to viii. of the *Politics*) more cautiously advocates a moderate indulgence in the existing scheme.

From this account of the bearing of Plato's scheme of constitutional change we may now turn to its details. The type of mind which underlies the true State, as we have said, is mind in its fulness, under the control of the sovereign element of reason; and the constitution in which it issues, a constitution similarly marked by the predominance of wisdom over the other elements of the State, is termed by Plato both monarchy and aristocracy, and may be simply called (since the ruler, whoever he may be, is the vehicle of the Idea) an ideocracy. From this ideocracy States sink to a timocracy, when the element of reason loses its due predominance, and gives place to "spirit". Timocracy has in Plato the peculiar meaning of government by the principle of honour (τιμή).¹ The admired type is now the man of high spirit and courageous temper, whose master motive is the point of honour; and the State and the name of the State correspond. It is accordingly a military State, after the manner of Sparta, and it promotes to the highest office those of its members who have won honour in war. It has affinities with ideocracy, because high spirit is allied to wisdom, and thus it retains the common meals and a proper system of common

The success
changes

¹ It generally meant a constitution in which power was given to men possessed of a property-qualification (τίμημα). In this sense of the word, Plato's "oligarchy" would be a "timocracy".

every direction. This is freedom—so-called; but it is that false freedom, which is the mere negation of order. It means in reality a refusal to pursue the quiet and orderly path of concentration, which alone makes a man capable of doing his work in the world. Everything by turns and nothing long, the “democratic” man tries everything and does nothing.¹ He, and the State which he makes, are almost absolutely “unjust”. In neither is there any concentration upon an appointed function: in both the lowest elements of their composition are let loose in a disorderly array to confound the higher and better. Without any binding principle of justice, democracy loses all unity: it is a State of three classes, demagogues, rich men, and poor, of which the first pillages the second by means of false accusations for the benefit of the third—and of itself. In this respect, as in others, democracy has its great affinities with oligarchy. Both display the same two cardinal faults of ignorance and selfishness; but democracy is more glaringly ignorant and more openly selfish. In both desire is the psychological basis; but in the one the single desire of money controls all other desires, and erects wealth into the end of the State, while in the other a desire for mere enjoyment reigns, and freedom is made a fetish. Both again perish out of their strength’s abundance: both collapse as a result of pushing their principles to excess.² Oligarchy fell, when the rich gave free reign to their avarice, and impoverished men by heavy usury till the inevitable revolt installed democracy: democracy falls when it allows the demagogue to run into excesses in his advocacy of “freedom”. Pillaging the rich until they find the burden intolerable, he at last discovers that he must either become a tyrant, or fall a prey to their vengeance. He chooses the former alternative; and a tyranny arises, animated equally with oligarchy and democracy by the principle of desire, but a desire which is both for gain and for enjoyment, a desire which belongs to a single individual, to whom the rest of the State is sacrificed. Tyranny possesses all the evils of

¹ The danger dreaded by modern thinkers is the opposite. The pressure of a majority, enforcing its own views and clinging to its own practices, may lead to monotony and conservatism.

² (cf. Aristotle’s very similar view, and his advice to those who would preserve either an extreme democracy or an extreme oligarchy, viz., that they should moderate its character (*infra*, pp. 489-90).

we must also admit that he shows no little appreciation of its difficulties and its real character. It was said above that he forgot the people ; and there is some truth in the saying. But while he neglected the many-headed being because it had little brains, he none the less felt that its heart was in the right place. He hates the demagogue rather than the demos. He hates the demagogue with the double fervour of an aristocrat and a *savant* : he has something of the pity of both for the people. Using the old figure of the ship of State, he compares the people to a captain besieged by rival claimants for the helm. The captain is deaf and short-sighted and ignorant of things nautical ; but he is a " noble " fellow, drugged by the would-be helmsmen with mandragora (misrepresentations and false doctrines), in order that they may get full control of the ship. Over these *prétendants* Plato pours vials of wrath : quacks and shams and men of fustian, they try to seize the helm though they have never been trained as pilots, and they plead in justification that such training is impossible. From them the people must be saved at all costs—but by their Saviour the people must be led.

THE LAW-STATE AND THE MIXED CONSTITUTION

§ 4. A different attitude towards democracy is apparent when we turn to the *Laws* ; and here, indeed, a totally new aspect of Plato's whole thought is revealed. ~~As yet we have never left~~ ^{New atmo-} ~~the pure ideal ;~~ ^{sphere of th} though we may have been dealing with actual ^{*Laws*} States, it has still been with us, as the standard for their classification, or the source of their derivation. But in the *Laws* it is Plato's aim to construct a half-way house between the actual ² and the ideal ; and here the ideal is not suspended in judgment over actual States, but modified to a degree, which will permit of a counter-modification of actual States sufficient to meet its demands. The State of the *Laws* is a " sub-ideal " State, near enough to actual conditions to be readily incorporated into actual life. From another point of view the change marked by the *Laws* is still more striking. Hitherto, whatever the subject under discussion, there has been one fundamental thought—the conception of politics as an art, and, as an art, ² demanding a wise practitioner, unfettered by any laws. But

basis of will is a shifting quicksand; and only in the right will which is always constant to one purpose, can a real and firm basis of authority be found. Not only so; but we must also realise, that only in the State which is based on this will, only in the individual who acts by this will, is there any true freedom. Freedom, as Montesquieu said, "ne peut consister qu'à pouvoir faire ce que l'on *doit vouloir*, et à n'être point contraint de faire ce que l'on ne doit pas vouloir".¹ In a State, freedom, ⁴ is the right of doing all that the laws permit, and in not being forced to do anything which law does not ordain.² That is to say, man is only a free agent when rationally choosing a course which his reason assures him is right, and is never less free than when "he does as he likes," and, obeying the dictates of passion, falls a victim to his own worse self.³ These are the truths which Plato enforces in the first Book of the *Laws*. ✓

War is eternal, in man and the State: there is an ancient strife, in the one between the better and the worse self, in the other between the better members and the worse. In both the war is for the sake of peace, a peace gained by the lasting triumph of the better part, and by the subjugation, though not the extirpation, of the worse. The end of the State, therefore, is peace, not indeed the peace of solitude, in which one party has destroyed the other, but the peace of harmony, in which both are reconciled under one leader (631 D). The leader is reason (rational will or right will), and reason is incarnate in law. Since the end of the State is peace, laws like those of Sparta, which look to war, and seek to inspire the one virtue of courage, are awry: the true law looks to peace, and to the sum of virtue; and, as the incarnation of reason the *leader*, it guides at every point. It extends over the whole of life: it regulates birth, it arranges marriage, it rules even in death, for the very dead must be buried according to law. Again, it deals with every passion and affection in life: it makes "definitions" (and by the honour and dishonour which it awards it "teaches" men

Conceptio
law as ex
sion of ra
will

4 ✓

¹ *Esprit des Lois*, bk. xi., c. 3. ² *Ibid.*, xxvi., c. 20.

³ This is what Plato teaches in the *Republic*. Freedom means the free action of the whole man according to the will of the best part of his being; and similarly a State is free, when it acts according to the will of the right ruler (which Plato substitutes for the "law" of which Montesquieu speaks) (bk. ix.). For the similar teaching of Aristotle, cf. *infra*, p. 355.

soul, rather than as a commanding force, to hale man away in its custody. If there is order, there must also be freedom. This is involved in the conception of self-control; for just as the rulers will not sympathise with the ruled (as that conception demands) unless obedience is paid to order, so, on the other hand, the ruled will not sympathise with the rulers, unless they in their turn respect freedom. Law, therefore, as the supreme ruler, must respect freedom; and Plato proposes a somewhat curious method by which it shall show its respect. The laws must be preceded by proems or prefaces, enunciating the principles on which they are based, and persuading the individual to accept them, by showing that they are the logical result of principles which he accepts. In these prefaces, explaining and justifying the laws they precede, one finds as it were a Greek counterpart of the function, which Parliament and the Press play to-day, in enabling a minister or a party to explain and to excuse the policy of a legislative scheme.

We have begun with law: from law we turn to the constitution, and examine in what way the principle of self-control will exhibit itself in the government, and by what means order will there be reconciled with freedom. But before doing so, we must notice that there is an important principle contained in the order which has been followed in beginning with law, and proceeding from law to constitution. The principle is, that the law-state must be the reverse of actual and contemporary States: it must adjust its government to the law, as the servant of the law, and not its law to the government, as the tool of the government. Contemporary States, Plato tells us in the *Laws*, are not really States. They are "aggregations of men dwelling in cities, who are the subjects and servants of a part of their own State, and each of them is named after the dominant power" (712 E-713 A). Democracy, for instance, is not a State: it is an aggregation of men, divided into two bodies, of which the one dominates the other, and deriving its generic name of democracy from the specific name of the dominant body—the demos. There is here no constitution, or order of the whole State, but a clique: there is no polity, but a party; and democracy is merely that party which has vanquished the others. Treating itself as the whole, this party lays down as law everything which

Plato's opinion
of contem-
porary consti-
tutions

these families into contact. The customs of one patriarchal family were seen not to be as those of another: a legislator was appointed to select the best customs, and the heads of the families formed themselves into a government to maintain the selection. In the stress here laid upon the patriarchal family, and in the view of law as a codification of custom, Plato hits intuitively upon two truths, the latter of which at any rate was foreign to the Greeks. From the tribal society he next turns to the civic; and a third era is marked by the building of Troy in the plain, away from the hills. The mention of Troy suggests its siege: its siege suggests heroic Greece; and so the progress is made to the fourth and final stage, which is the period of the three Dorian kingdoms, Sparta, Argos and Messene. By an historic consideration of these three Plato attempts to decide "what is well or ill settled, and what laws are the salvation, and what are the destruction of cities, and what changes would make a State happy". The phrase reminds one vividly of the way in which Aristotle speaks in his sixth book: he too will consider what are the ways in which States are saved and destroyed; he too will discuss the manner of making actual constitutions better than they are. But Aristotle bases what he has to say on a full consideration of contemporary States: Plato goes back to early Greek history, or moves eastward to a criticism of Persian monarchy. And there is one great difference between Aristotle and Plato. Aristotle is willing to consider how to preserve the actual State with some modification of its excess: Plato will not for a minute consider the salvation of anything that actually exists except it be recast and remoulded. Aristotle builds an ideal State, and a "polity" which is sub-ideal, and considers even the preservation of the non-ideal, non-moral State: Plato advances to the second stage, but will not enter the third.

The three Dorian kingdoms had great advantages. They were closely allied with one another;¹ and the stability of each might seem assured by the help of the rest. At the same time there was within each State a free field for the legislator:

Necessity of
mixed con-
stitution

¹ The three kings *and peoples* were united by oaths, according to common laws regulating rulers and subjects—the kings swearing not to make their power tyrannical, the peoples, subject to that condition, not to dethrone the kings (684 A). This seems the germ of the idea of a contract between king and people.

The two forms which naturally suggest themselves for mixture are the two extremes of monarchy and democracy, of which the two types may be said to be Persia and Athens. Pure and unmixed monarchy, already condemned in the experience of ancient Greece, is further condemned in Plato's eyes by the example of Persia. The history of Persia shows the tendency of monarchy to lose all regard for its subjects and all sense of a common weal, and to use its authority for the selfish interests of the monarch at the cost of his subjects' liberty. True distributive justice, we are now told, requires that the honour of office should go not to the strong, not to the wealthy, but to the temperate and unselfish, since these qualities are the bond of society. But pure and unmixed democracy stands equally condemned with absolute monarchy, though for other reasons. "The principle which feels pleasure or pain in the individual is like the mass or the populace in a State." In the individual, desire cannot judge for itself: it listens to the judgments of reason, and follows the dictates of prudence. It is as idle for the mass or the populace to attempt to judge. It goes ill with the drama when a theatrocracy begins, and the mass of the spectators judge the plays, as though they were connoisseurs in matters of art. As in art, so in politics; the rule of intelligence is inevitable. A "mute" theatre, an assembly which only says "yea" and "nay" to the propositions submitted to its decision, seem to be Plato's ideals. Yet he admits that while both monarchy and democracy, considered in themselves, have these defects, either has the qualities of its defects. Liberty is the blessing of democracy, if ignorance is its curse; monarchy suggests, if it does not always supply, a principle of order, though it tends to destroy liberty. Combine the two, and with order maintained by the rulers and liberty secured to their subjects, you will get good feeling between the ruler and the ruled. Now these are the great things for which a State must seek; and if they are found in a combination of monarchy and democracy, that is the ideal State. To the construction of such an ideal State, Plato accordingly turns. Instead of turning kings into philosophers, and utterly rejecting peoples, he tries, as practical men have always tried, to reconcile the principle of order, represented by monarchy, with the freedom of popular sovereignty.

Mixture of
monarchy and
democracy

The latter is God's judgment: it is justice. It cannot indeed be exclusively used: to avoid the people's ill-will the absolute equality of the lot must occasionally be used for some of the offices, but it must be used as seldom as possible. The proportionate equality of an election in which the better have the greater voice is the ideal.

The division into four classes is based on the economic structure of the State. Communism, we now find, is abandoned. ^{Economic structure of the colony} There are three possibilities with regard to property,¹ Plato considers. Communism is one, and it is the ideal; and in sketching any new possibility one must keep as close to that ideal as possible. The second possibility, whatever it may be, is left to future consideration: the third is adopted in the *Laws*. Private possession of inalienable lots, with a limitation of the number of offspring as its safeguard, is this third possibility; but every owner of a lot must feel that it is common to the whole of the State, as well as his own property. Here, as in the law and the government, there must be a reconciling of freedom and order, resulting in self-control. Such a reconciliation is attained when the freedom of private ownership is limited by the sense, that the owner belongs to the order of the State, and that his ownership must be limited by considerations of its good. This must always be the true conception of private property in land; and it is a close approximation to the more famous Aristotelian formula, "private possession, common use". But Plato goes further. The economic man is to be banished: currency is to exist merely for the sake of exchange, and not as a means of storing value: the "wealth of the nation" is to be spiritual and not material. The result of these views is the same tendency to "physiocracy" which Aristotle shared: it is "what husbandry bears and gives" which Plato alone desires. In some ways the *Laws* appears more reactionary than the *Republic*: it harks back still more decidedly to simplicity at the cost of economic development. "The statesman has nothing to do with laws about shipowners and merchants, and retailers and inn-keepers and tax-collectors and mines and money-lending and compound interest: bidding good-bye to these, he gives

¹ 739 B, where according to Hildenbrand the reference is not to three possible constitutions, but three possible ways of dealing with property.

sketched by Plato. It is liable, Aristotle thinks, to two objections. A mixture of three constitutions, of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, is better than one of two; nor has Plato mixed those two which he professed to mix, monarchy and democracy; he has united oligarchy and democracy, with a leaning towards the former. But as far as one can see, Plato meant by monarchy the principle of the rule of intelligence, and by democracy the principle of popular control, which are really the only two principles between which choice can lie, or of which a mixture can be made. He was not thinking of the details or the organisation of either, but of the principles they connoted, and the type of mind they expressed. Both of Aristotle's criticisms break down, if this is the case; and both break down for the same reason, that monarchy is used in so wide a sense, as to include both the rule of one and the rule of a few. In any case, Aristotle's extreme statement—that Plato *professes* that he will mix tyranny and democracy (which are either no constitutions or are the worst of constitutions), while what he *does* is to mix oligarchy and democracy, with a larger proportion of oligarchy than of democracy—cannot be accepted. Plato is careful to profess that it is the good side of monarchy (not tyranny, nor even monarchy, but only the good to be found in monarchy), which he mixes, not with democracy pure and simple, and certainly not with extreme democracy, but with the good side of democracy. In what he does, again, Plato seems painfully concerned to hold the balance fair between the monarchical (or oligarchical) element and the democratic. The same number of members of council is chosen from each division: every member of every division can join in the choice of the members for each division. That the members of the upper divisions must always join—that the members of the lower divisions in certain cases need not join—serves only to lay a duty on the rich, and to take a burden off the poor. But Aristotle's objection, that the scheme inclines to oligarchy, has, nevertheless, some force. It is an oligarchical "trick," according to a view which Aristotle expresses in the *Politics*, to let the people, and the people only, go unpunished for neglecting political duties: it is a trick which aims at concentrating power *de facto*, if not *de jure*, in the hands of a clique. Clubs may

In yet another respect may Plato be accused of forgetting his own principle in the course of the *Laws*, and of bringing the law-state back to the *Republic*. We have seen that the very essence of the law-state is a surrender of the idea of flexibility and the free play of the knowledge immanent in the government. The law-state is a State with a sovereign and rigid law, and with a subordinate and ministering executive. For a while Plato remains true to this conception in the *Laws*. He thinks that after a certain time the law will have been perfected; and once perfected, it is to be stereotyped: "from that time there shall be no more change" (772 C). In the same spirit, as part of this fixedness and to defend it, he would have the forms of sculpture and of music as fixed as they are in Egypt. The whole State is to become as it were a political Pyramid, unchanging and unchanged through all the centuries. The men whom it trains will live faithfully in its forms: the government will be its servant and secure its permanence. The guardians of the law, elected by the assembly for twenty years, and including as their president a minister of education, will be the mainstay of the constitution; the senate of 360 members will stand between the guardians and the assembly, counselling the one and guiding the other; a college of elders, annually recruited by a subtle system of indirect election, will keep all from overpassing their appointed bounds. But this excessive rigidity disappears in the later pages of the *Laws*. A Nocturnal Council appears, and in it and in its powers the old ideal of the rule of knowledge and of the philosopher returns. On this council falls the mantle of the departed legislator: it is a sanhedrim and an academy, engaged both in the study of legislation and the amendment of the law. Composed of the ten eldest guardians of the law, of all who have served as directors of education, and of priests, this council must be philosophic enough, Plato tells us, though he does not say how it acquires its philosophy, to acknowledge the relation of particular virtues to virtue in general. Partly in the light of that knowledge, partly in the light of foreign laws and customs, which its members cause to be investigated, it changes and amends the law. Though nothing is said of the relation of the Council to the guardians of the law, it is obvious that it is

the law and the whole State. Something of philosophic knowledge (however it may be acquired) is indeed demanded in the members of the nocturnal council: for the rest education ceases when it has reached the sciences of arithmetic and geometry, somewhere about the twentieth year. Unlike the education of the *Republic*, therefore, the education of the *Laws* is pitched at a level which makes it possible for all to participate—as Plato enacts that all shall—in the whole of its course. The care of the State for the education of its citizens begins even before birth. Marriage, which in the *Laws* is monogamous, and consistent with the preservation of the family, is still regarded by Plato from a physical point of view: it is still to be regulated by the State with a view to the production of a good physical stock. The child is left with its parents; but a Minister of Education regulates its physical and moral growth, remembering that as the twig is bent, the branch will grow (765 E). There are three sides to education. One is gymnastics, which consists of dancing and wrestling of a military character;¹ another is music; a third is a certain amount of science. To music, in the sense of words set to an accompaniment, Plato would assign a very large scope in the *Laws*, as Aristotle does in his ideal State. It is the great assuager of passion and teacher of self-control; and Plato is anxious that the stability of the law should be reflected in a corresponding system of music. The legislator is to institute types, possessed of a natural truth and correctness, which, after the manner of Egypt, shall remain fresh and true for “ten thousand years”. And not only is the stability of law to be enforced in this subtle and more spiritual way, but (*durum sed levius fit patientia*) the young must learn by heart the whole of Plato's treatise itself. The science which is to be studied must be studied in the same practical spirit. Arithmetic, geometry and astronomy must be pursued, with a view to understanding the right distribution of the territory and the citizens of the State. There is here something of that prepossession for the hidden mysteries of number, into which Pythagoreanism had fallen, and which marks the old age of Plato.

¹ The right to share in the assembly, we must remember, is connected with the bearing of arms.

moral action and would make goodness at the best automatic, at the worst hypocritical. In modern theory, punishment is primarily *deterrent*. "The State in its capacity as sustainer of rights (and it is in this capacity that it punishes¹), has nothing to do with the amount of moral depravity in the criminal, and the primary reference in punishment is—not to the effect of the punishment on the person punished, but to its effects on others."² It aims at sustaining the scheme of rights in the future by connecting a feeling of fear with its violation in the present, and it does so by means of a striking example. Yet it is true that to deter men from violating this scheme is also to deter the criminal who is punished, and to that extent, and in that way, the criminal is reformed in punishment. Such reformation is however an "incident of the preventive function" of punishment.³ Plato reversed the order, and made prevention an incident of the reformatory function of punishment.

At the end of the *Laws* Plato strikes the same note which ^{Epilogue to the *Laws*} he struck at the beginning of the *Republic*. He is still a crusader, and the infidel is still the Sophist. Nor is he an infidel only by metaphor. This last work of Plato's life has something of the mystical lore of life's sunset. As he drew towards the shades, he felt more and more the littleness of human things, the greatness of God, and the supreme need of a reverent faith:

We the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
We men, who in our morn of growth defied
The elements,

are after all but "playthings of the gods"; enough

If, as towards the silent land we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know.⁴

In this evening spirit Plato returns to the "rationalist," who maintains that all creation is "not by the action of mind or of any God, but by nature and chance only" (889 C). Proceeding from this materialistic hypothesis, he tells us, the rationalist

¹ Whereas to Plato it punishes in the capacity of moral educator of its citizens.

² Green, *Principles*, § 193. ³ *Ibid.*, § 204.

⁴ Wordsworth's sonnet, "An After-thought".

so a mind moves each of its parts, and "all things are full of gods". And thus we come back upon the old lesson of the *Republic*: the State is a product of mind. "Law and also art . . . are the creations of *mind* in accordance with right reason," and "both alike exist by Nature, and no less than Nature". Here finally disappears the antithesis of "art" and "Nature"; for Nature is not mere mindless being, nor art man's perversion of that being: "Nature" is being which exists through mind, and art is nothing else than that which likewise is through mind.

Two thousand years and more have still left us face to face with the same problems. Nor can the political philosophy of Plato be other than eternally and everlastingly true, because it is wrought into the substance of a philosophy of the world, which can never lose its truth. His philosophy has its time-vesture: it is the philosophy of a limited experience. It is of a city-state he thinks; and it is of a city-state that he states the truth which he has found. Much of its detail has an historical interest: all of its essence is still essential. Much may be criticised; yet the staple of criticism is simply this, that he was too generously eager for the reign of pure truth and the realisation of pure principle.

CHAPTER V

ARISTOTLE—HIS LIFE AND TIMES: THE PLACE OF THE *POLITICS* IN HIS SYSTEM

THE SOURCES OF THE *POLITICS*.

§ 1. **T**O knowledge, as much as to the objects of knowledge, Aristotle applied the idea of development. Truth itself, or facts themselves, compel men to make a beginning of knowledge; and under the same compulsion it is developed, until the object of study is fully realised, and the development of knowledge comes to its "end". Aristotle thus conceived of his own contributions to knowledge, not as breaking fresh ground, but as developing the contributions of his predecessors. Not only so; but he also conceived himself to stand at the end of this process, and regarded his own development of his predecessor's work as marking the final attainment of Greek knowledge. In the field of knowledge of the State, or political science, this eschatology is necessarily connected with a belief that the object of knowledge, which is also progressive like the knowledge itself, has come to its "end": the city-state is to Aristotle the goal of perfection, and in politics "almost everything has been discovered". It is easy to regard Aristotelian eschatology as arrogant. But if one confines oneself to Greece, it is true that Aristotle set the final form upon its political thought, and that at a time when the object of that thought, the autonomous city, was coming to its end. The *Politics* is the last word of Greece in political science: the Stoics, when they come, are the reflection and the teachers, not of Greece, but of a world-state created by the Macedonian conquest of the East; and it is to that, and to the Roman Empire which succeeded it, that their philosophy applies. As a matter of fact, his eschatology led Aristotle to

Aristotle's
relation to his
predecessors

regard himself rather as the systematiser of a given knowledge, than as the creator of an original philosophy. It led him to attach great importance to the results of previous thinkers; and in the *Politics* especially we are conscious of a constant reference, explicit or implied, to the teaching of his precursors in this field of inquiry. It seems at first sight inconsistent with this view, that Aristotle should, wherever he mentions his predecessors, appear to show a spirit of hostility to their views. Especially does his attitude to his own master, Plato, seem open to criticism. If Plato is his friend, truth, and a very candid truth, seems very much more of a friend. The answer to such an objection depends upon an appreciation of Greek habits of quotation and criticism. Where Aristotle agrees with the views of a predecessor, he adopts those views without mention; and it is the fact that he names when he criticises and is silent when he agrees, which makes him appear so critical and so combative. A new charge, that of plagiarism, may indeed emerge from this defence; but plagiarism in days before printing, plagiarism in books which look like the notes of a lecture, whether made in advance by the master, or taken down by pupils from his dictation, is not a serious charge. Pupils who had no libraries would count it for righteousness to a master that he should make them acquainted with views, which were no doubt matters of oral tradition rather than theses maintained in books—which, in that case, without the *litera scripta* to attest their authorship, would be (and were) regarded rather as tenets of this or that school, than as products of this or that thinker's mind. Nor indeed does Aristotle merely adopt; he tests before adoption. He first attempts to discover what amount of truth there is in a previous view, by means of a searching criticism; and then, and only then, as a rule, he assimilates into his system the truth which survives the criticism. And the criticism is on the whole sympathetic: even where he detects error, he often allows that the error is one of stating too generally what ought to be stated with limitation, or, at any rate, he shows "the cause of the error" into which a previous thinker has fallen.¹ On the other hand his criticism is often external

¹ Cf. *Metaphysics*, 989 a 30 sqq., on Anaxagoras: 985 a 4 sqq., on Empedocles.

and defective: he criticises Plato, for instance, in the *Politics*, for saying things which he had never said;¹ or he colours a Platonic view in order that it may be amenable to a criticism which will elicit the right view; or finally, though he states the conception to be criticised fairly, he criticises from some particular point of view, and entirely fails to do justice to the whole conception. But then—is this peculiar to Aristotle? If one knew the Sophists more thoroughly, one might discover that Plato had coloured their views to suit his purpose, or that he had criticised partially, and not sympathetically.

respect for
popular
opinion

The respect which, whether by positive adoption or negative criticism, Aristotle thus showed, on the whole, to previous thinkers, was also paid by him, in the realm of practical science—of ethics and politics—to popular opinion and existing practice. In the *Ethics* he speaks of the respect to be paid to the sayings and opinions of the old and the wise;² and he even asserts that the *consensus mundi* constitutes ethical truth.³ In the *Politics*, too, he shows a great respect for the judgment of the many: their collective virtue, their collective capacity, entitle them to rule, and enable them to see how to rule. His aim might be said to be the refining of common sense: he adopts, for instance, popular opinion on the subject of the classification of States, and then proceeds to refine it, by substituting a qualitative and causal for a quantitative and accidental differentia. This respect for popular opinion involves a certain Conservatism, which distinguishes Aristotle from Plato, the Radical innovator, despising popular opinion as the mere verdict of the cave. Aristotle it is true attempted to create an ideal State; but his wings soon flagged in the attempt to imitate the flights of Platonic fancy, and the books which treat of the ideal State are significantly incomplete.⁴ The essence of the *Politics* is its justification of existing institutions like the State, slavery, the family; or again its practical discussion of the proper medicines for the diseases of actual States. The “divine right of things as they are” appealed to Aristotle. At the same time, it would be unjust to stop short at such a dictum, and not to admit

¹ It is true that Plato had said things in his lectures which do not occur in his writings.

² 1143 b 11-14.

³ 1173 a 1, ἀ . . . πᾶσι δοκεῖ ταῦτ' εἶναι φανερόν.

⁴ Von Wilamowitz-Möllendorf, *Aristoteles und Athen*, i., 358.

that "things as they are" only appeal to Aristotle, when they are what they ought to be. The State whose natural character he justifies is no "perverted" State of ordinary life, but a "right" State whose members form an association in good life; and the slavery which he vindicates is one, which, while it sets the master free for a strenuous life, assures the slave of that moral guidance which he cannot find in himself. In a word, Aristotle "does not so much raise new points of view, as conceive given relations in their ideal meaning".¹ The "given" upon which he works, the "data" of his politics, is indeed narrow: he rests upon Greek experience alone, and he does not consider its last phase, the Hellenisation of Asia, any more than he shows traces in his zoological writings of the new store of facts which Alexander's expedition had brought to light. But it could hardly be expected that the Achillean escapade of Alexander should, especially by contemporaries, be regarded as a new datum of science.² And the fact that he confined his view to the limits of the Greek world made it possible for Aristotle to arrive at those conceptions of the functions of the State and its various kinds, which are permanently true, but which nevertheless, if he had included a wider area in the mass of details to be generalised, might never have been attained. If he limited himself to the Greek in particular, he generalised the experience of the Greek into laws of universal application.

Within the limits of the Greek world, the knowledge he had amassed was singularly full. From Sicily to the Euxine, from Cyrene to Thrace, he knows and can cite the constitutional development and the political vicissitudes of each State. Diogenes Laertius assigns to Aristotle 158 *Polities of States*, "general and particular, democratic, oligarchic, aristocratic, and tyrannical". Some have viewed these *Polities* as compilations intended for a collection—as forming, along with a parallel collection of laws, a sort of dictionary of politics to which reference could be made

Extent of
political in-
formation

¹ Eucken, *Die Methode der Aristotelischen Forschung*, p. 15.

² There are many omissions, however, in Aristotle, which cannot be explained in this way. He never alludes to the Athenian empire: he never mentions the federations of which there had been several examples in Greece. He only considers the *πόλις*, and refuses to look at any of its extensions. Similarly he never considers the subdivision of the *πόλις*—the Attic deme, for instance; and hence he never discovers the principle of representation, which was to some extent present in the relations of the deme to the Council of 500.

of the encyclopædic character which some authorities have assigned to the *Politics*. This is the work, in four books, on *Customs*, probably identical with another work on *Barbarian Customs*, which is also mentioned. The *Customs of the Etruscans*, to which Athenæus refers, would appear to be an excerpt from this work. It is interesting as showing Aristotle's acquaintance with the non-Hellenic world, and as explaining the references which we find in the *Politics* to customs like compurgation and compensation for murder.

THE LIFE OF ARISTOTLE

§ 2. To complete this sketch of the background of the *Politics*, some mention must now be made of the facts of Aristotle's own life and the condition of contemporary Greece.¹ Stress has been laid on the fact that Aristotle was the son of an Asclepiad or physician, and that, as such, he was probably trained in anatomy. His practical knowledge of dissection, it has been said, explains the analytic method, by the use of which he begins the *Politics*: it explains the comparison between the State and the human body, which he occasionally draws.² But Plato also had spoken in the *Phædrus* of dividing a subject naturally by its joints: Plato also had used the comparison of the State to the body; and the use of analogies from the arts is Aristotle's early life the commonplace of Greek philosophy. Stress has again been laid, but probably with no more truth, on his birth at Stagira in Chalcidice, whence, it is suggested, he derived a "strong aversion" to Macedonia, which led him to refuse to study its constitution in the *Politics*.³ From Stagira he came to Athens to study under Plato; but he also studied the writings and the methods of Isocrates, though he did not sit under the great rhetorician himself. The influence of Isocrates explains his interest in rhetoric and poetry: it may also have helped to turn his mind to the study of logic.⁴ But the influence of Plato was dominant, and it attracted him from the study of speech to the study of man, to that domain of ethics and politics, which, as the *Republic* and the *Laws* show, was perhaps the greatest interest

¹ Cf., for what follows, Von Wilamowitz-Möllendorf, *op. cit.*, i., c. x.

² Oncken, *Die Staatslehre des Aristoteles*, pp. 3-7.

³ Von Wilamowitz-Möllendorf, *op. cit.*, i., 312.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

a man of the world, acquainted with the courts of princes. When he writes of education, when he speaks of politics, he is discussing things of which he has been a part. It is not only the knowledge he has amassed, not only his quiet naturalism, not only his respect for popular opinion and the sayings of the elders, which command our respect for his *Politics*: it is, perhaps more than all these, the feeling that he knew from the inside the meaning of politics. There is evidence that he had some influence with Philip: the refounding of Stagira is attributed to his suggestion; and his *δικαιώματα*, as we saw, are said to have been Philip's guide in the solution of Greek disputes. His advice to Alexander on the treatment of the conquered Asiatics and on the settlement of colonies suggests something more than academical exercises after the Isocratic fashion. But the most important part of Aristotle's life is not that which he spent at Pella; and his relations to Philip and Alexander are perhaps not the most influential of his political relations. His life at Athens as the head of a school from 335 almost until his death in 322, and his connection with Antipater—these are the things which touch the *Politics* most closely.

During this period Antipater was regent of Macedonia, while Alexander was absent in the East. In that capacity he had the general superintendence of Greek affairs. Aristotle was his intimate friend; and remembering this fact, one feels that Aristotle's suggested emendations of actual States, and his proposal—as the practical ideal for Greece—of the “polity” or rule of the middle class in all her States, possess (or must to hearers who knew his relations to Antipater have seemed to possess) a very important contemporary meaning. For why should not Antipater use the *Politics* to solve constitutional difficulties, as Philip had used the *δικαιώματα* to settle judicial disputes? Yet it is not as meant for Greece at large, but as speaking to Athens, that the *Politics* is most eloquent; and some account of that Athens, in which Aristotle lectured on politics, seems indispensable, for it cannot but be that he spoke most directly to the city which he had learnt to know better than any other in Greece, the city in which he taught, the city whose constitutional history was the most instructive of any in Greece, the city which had in her day been the mistress of the

Aristotle
and Athens

ideas, perhaps those of the *Laws* still more than those of the *Republic*, is striking. It is clear that the State was thrown into the melting-pot: this actual innovation, and the archaising tendencies of earlier years, are both significant proofs. But these are the conditions, in which the sketch of an ideal State is absolutely practical; and under these conditions Aristotle's ideal State, equally with his practical suggestions to diseased constitutions, acquires a contemporary meaning. Nor, living as he did in an Athens animated by a religious revival, an Athens supervising its youth by moral officials, whose very names represented moral qualities like self-discipline and moderation, could Aristotle do otherwise than insist on one of his cardinal lessons, the moral purpose of the State.

"Indeed, these are giant times, and in them Aristotle stands like a giant. In distant Susa the young lord of the world solemnises his marriage to Rhoxana, a symbol of peace and reconciliation in that ancient feud of the nations, which Homer and Herodotus had painted. It is the new-born Achilles' wedding to Polyxena; and yet again it is the dawn of Hellenism, for the child of the marriage of the nations is Christianity. In distant Athens rises undismayed the voice of the old man, wise, and yet of little faith for all his wisdom, denying the possibility of the union, and asserting relentlessly the superiority of the Hellenic race against the barbarians and the King of Macedon. In Athens herself, and in all Hellas, it lies like a mountain of lead upon all patriotic hearts, that the tiny States of their birth, which they love so well, should cease to mean the world. With redoubled ardour they cherish the sanctity of their domestic gods and customs and institutions, calling to remembrance the great deeds, which with these, and through these, their fathers had done before them."¹

These then are the times in which Aristotle lived, and this is his attitude to the past and its thinkers. But to have considered these does not yet entitle us to say that we have sketched the background of the *Politics*. The *Politics* and the *Ethics* form practically one treatise: what then are the exact relations of the one part of this treatise to the other? Many terms from Aristotle's philosophic terminology are applied to

¹ Von Wilamowitz-Möllendorf, *Aristoteles und Athen*, i., 370, 371.

holds at the beginning of the *Politics*, attain the best results, if it follows the facts most closely, and if, when they develop, it follows their development from the beginning. It will attain a true conception of form most certainly, if it observes matter in its growth towards form.

The word development brings us to a new conception, that of "end," which is universal in Aristotle's philosophy, and is closely connected with the allied conception of "form". The Teleological view of the world conception of end is applied by Aristotle to the whole of Nature. His view of the world is teleological:¹ everywhere things are regarded as determined towards an end. If we ask why we should regard the world teleologically, we are only told that "if the products of art are determined to an end, obviously the products of Nature are also".² This anthropomorphic argument in its bare statement is not very conclusive; but perhaps Aristotle's teleology rested, not on any such argument, but on his whole conception of matter and form, and of their relation one to another. Form is an end towards which matter is determined; matter is the primary material necessary for the realisation of some end; and this primary material develops until the end is realised. There is thus a constant movement from matter to form, or from the "Potential," which is matter, to the "Actual," which is matter informed by form. This great general conception, of "movement" towards an "end," is applied by Aristotle, as we have already said, to knowledge or science itself: it is applied to poetry; it is applied to politics. In a science like astronomy there is a certain primary material consisting of obvious empirical generalisations about the stars made by the shepherd or sailor, which "moves" towards an "end" of scientific knowledge: in poetry, there is the primary material of impromptu imitations, which has "increased" until

¹ Cf. what was before said of Plato, pp. 126, 154. Aristotle differs from Plato in not believing in a single end of all being, an Idea of the Good: each form is to him the end of whatsoever it shapes, but there is no single end of all existence. On the other hand, as we shall see, Aristotle believes in a single end of human action, the human good, which must be postulated, unless we are to fall into a *progressio ad infinitum*. I.e., if it be said, Callias did this, in order to get at that, then we may ask, Why did he want to get that? and this process would continue *ad infinitum* unless it could be stopped, as Aristotle supposes that it is, by the final answer—"To attain the human Good".
² *Physics*, 199 a 17-18.

person, it seems to be parallel with God: "God and Nature do nothing in vain".¹ Now God, we are also told, "causes movement as an object of love";² that is to say, He does not cause movement actively, or as acting of Himself, but passively, and as being the cause of matter's acting. He is not an active, but an attractive force. But if He be an attractive force, He is not external, but immanent in things in the attraction which He inspires. Similarly Nature if it be parallel with God, is not an active, but an attractive force: it does not act on matter, but attracts matter, so that matter moves *sua sponte* towards Nature in response to its attraction. But, indeed, when pushed to its ultimate meaning, Nature is not merely parallel with God, but is God; and the "nature" of each thing is its immanent impulse to become as like God as possible. This being so, Nature is present as an agency in things, in the sense that the attraction towards itself which it inspires is present as the mainspring of movement. And it is present throughout, both in the primary material, and in its movement, and in the form in which that movement ends. Aristotle therefore applies the term "Nature" in the *Physics* to each of these three stages. Nature is "the primary material which is the substratum of all things possessing in themselves an impulse towards movement":³ secondly, "Nature, when the name is applied in the sense of development, is the path towards Nature" in the sense of form:⁴ thirdly, "Nature is form,"⁵ or "end". Each of these three is called "Nature," because it is what it is "by nature," or, in other words, by the agency of Nature as immanent in it. But it is obvious that form or end is, as Aristotle says, Nature in a peculiar sense, because it means the final identification with Nature, attraction towards which is the root of the whole matter, and because in it the agency of Nature is therefore most vivid and close. The instance of human association, as the sphere of a movement of matter culminating in the form of the State, may serve to illustrate this view. Such association belongs to the class of things possessing in themselves a source of motion. It is therefore in the sphere of Nature's action, or

¹ *De Caelo*, 271 a 33. ² *Metaphysics*, 1072 b 2.

³ *Physics*, 193 a 28. ⁴ *Ibid.*, 193 b 12.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 193 a 30; *Politics*, 1252 b 32.

rather, attraction. Its primary material, the family association, is "Nature," because it is "by nature," and it is by nature, because it is what it is through the agency of Nature,¹ attraction towards which determines in the first place its primary character, just as that same attraction causes, in the second place, its movement from that primary character towards ultimate form. But the State, the final goal or form of such movement, is most of all Nature, most of all by nature. And this brings us to one of the most fundamental things in Aristotle's political philosophy. While he holds primitive society to be natural (like Hobbes), he also holds the final State to be natural, and still more natural (whereas Hobbes would regard it as artificial). Nay, he would hold that primitive society was only by nature because it was an approximation to the State, and through the State to Nature itself.

But movement may also take place by art as well as by Nature, by external agencies as well as by an immanent force. Things not possessing in themselves a source of movement are changed by human agency: the marble becomes a statue by the hand of the sculptor. But human agency acts not only within this province: it also acts in the province of things which have in themselves a source of movement. It may act to thwart Nature: it may also act to realise Nature. Human agency may, like rude or imperfect material, be a reason for the failure of the movement of human association to find its proper haven, and may account for that movement's stopping short at an imperfect form, or going awry into a perverted constitution. But human agency is rather conceived by Aristotle as a force co-operative with Nature. Art, we may say, loves Nature, and Nature too loves art: man is animated in his action by that same attraction towards Nature, which inspires movement in the sphere of things which have in themselves a source of movement. Art, in Aristotle's words, partly finishes what Nature fails to finish, and partly imitates what she actually does.² There is no necessary distinction between the artificial and the natural, such as the Sophists had made.³ Poetry naturally

¹ In the sense of God, or the purpose of all movement.

² *Physics*, 199 a 15.

³ Cf. Plato, *Laws*, 709 B: "God governs all things, and chance and opportunity co-operate with Him in the government of human affairs: and art should be there also". (Cf. *supra*, p. 207.)

grew—as men carried it forward;¹ and again the impulse towards a State existed by Nature—but the man who compounded the State was the greatest of benefactors.² That there should be this room for human co-operation obviously implies that there may be a certain defect in Nature. And Aristotle admits that this is the case.³ Nature is indeed like “a prudent man,” or “a wise steward”: it does nothing in vain; “its product is perfection”. It gives the proper tool along with the capacity for its use: to each capacity it gives its separate tool. Yet “where it is not possible to do otherwise, it uses the same tool for several purposes”; and it may fail of perfection; it may wish one thing, and the opposite may often happen.⁴ And the reason is that matter, as we said, is not always congruous with form; and Nature, as the force impelling matter to form, may therefore, and indeed must therefore, sometimes fall short of its aim. But Nature’s defects are man’s opportunities: it is through them that art gets a new sphere of operation. It is because Nature does not always succeed in its political creations that “political art” can arise to offer its suggestions and apply its remedies. For Political Science, to Aristotle as much as to Plato, is an art as well as a science: it acts as well as analyses.

In what ways did this conception of teleological development, realising itself, or realised by man, determine the political theory of Aristotle? It helped him, as we have already incidentally seen, to an evolutionary view of the State: it saved him from any mechanical view of political origins. Believing in development, he naturally turned to an historical method: he traced the historical growth of the State from its first origin: he criticised Plato’s theory of revolutions on the ground that it was unhistorical, and attempted an historical account himself. It is this evolutionary and historical character of his work which makes it appeal to modern minds. But it must always be remembered that his view of development is teleological, and as such, both free from defects that beset modern views of evolution when applied to politics, and liable, on the other hand, to errors of its own. Because his view is teleological, Aristotle

¹ *Poetics*, 1449 a 13.

² *Politics*, 1253 a 30; cf. Plato’s *Cratylus* (434-35), where Socrates says that language is both natural and artificial.

³ *De Part. Animal.*, 683 a 22.

⁴ *Politics*, 1254 b 27-34.

emphasises, not the process of development, but the end. "Animals are not constructed as they are, because they have developed as they have: they have developed as they have in order to attain the construction which they show."¹ The end explains the development, and not the development the end. Asserted against Empedocles, and in another field than that of politics, this might still be asserted against Spencer, in the sphere of human "conduct". Because it explains the development, the end is in a sense prior to it, while yet, because it comes before the end in order of time, the development is also prior to the end. Thus Aristotle can both say in the *Politics* that the State is prior to the household and the individual, and assert in the *Ethics* that the household is prior to the State. The end, then, explains the development: the development does not explain the end. The immediate reasons which move a thing as it develops will not explain the reasons which underlie the thing as it stands completed. Mere life is the immediate reason of the development of the State: good life explains its existence. Similarly, "the lips are soft, fleshy, and able to part, both for protection of the teeth . . . and *still more* for the Good; for they are a means to the use of speech".² They developed, we may say, for protection: they exist for the sake of speech.³

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ate

In both of these ways, in insisting on the priority of the end, and in asserting that what animates development is not what animates completed result, Aristotle supplies the corrective of

¹ *De Gen. Animal.*, 778 b 1-5.

² *De Part. Animal.*, ii., 659 b 30.

³ The thing as it develops is the "necessary" matter, which is moved immediately by necessity, as is the family association by the need of life, or the tissues which develop into the lips by the need of protection; but the thing as it stands developed has also an element "of supererogation," and matter of supererogation is moved by a final end, or a goal. *E.g.*, the developed State has an element of supererogation in its moral institutions, the reason for which is the final end of man, the human good; the lips, as a developed organ, have an element of supererogation in their power of speech, the reason of which is once more the human good; for speech, as we learn in the *Politics*, is the basis of justice. So too the human seed, "superfluous matter" remaining after the needs of nutrition (which led to its growth) have been properly satisfied, serves man for the final end of "partaking in the eternal and divine"; since the continuation of the race by the propagation of the species represents a certain attainment of immortality. True of Nature, this principle is also true of man: he may, for an immediate reason of necessity, do something which ultimately serves a final purpose of good; he may find a kingdom, when he is only seeking his father's asses.

any view, based on modern theories of evolution, which would treat natural man as explaining political man. His teleology gives him the idea of development, but of development determined and coloured by a final cause. And it gives him further, and above all, an organic conception of the relations of the individual to the State. Since membership of a proper State is the end of human development, and since its end is the real nature or meaning of anything, it follows that man has his real meaning as a member of a State. In the State, and as a member of a State, he lives and has his being: without the State, and apart from the State, he has no meaning. This is the meaning of the famous phrase, "man is by nature a political being". His real "nature" or meaning consists in that citizenship of a *πόλις*, which is the end of his development. Until he has attained this citizenship, he has not attained his nature, and he is not man in the full meaning of man. Complete *humanitas* implies *civitas*; and every proper man, as a man, is a citizen. As the end of his development is citizenship, so the end of all his action is "the political good". He is, only as a member of the State: he *acts*, only as a member of the State, and to promote its aim. The one proposition follows inevitably upon the other. It may seem at first sight as if the being and the action of the individual were limited by this way of thinking to a single aspect, and as if the right of the individual to a free and full development were consequently destroyed. But as we have seen in treating of Plato, such a *prima facie* view is quite unjustified. Teleology comes not to destroy, but to justify. "It was because Plato and Aristotle conceived the life of the *πόλις* so clearly as the *τέλος* of the individual, that they laid the foundation of all true theory of rights." For Aristotle "regards the State as a society of which the life is maintained by what its members do for the sake of maintaining it, by functions consciously fulfilled with reference to that *end*, and which in that sense imposes duties; and at the same time as a society from which its members derive the ability through education and protection to fulfil their several functions, and which in that sense confers rights".¹

¹Green, *Principles*, § 39. At the same time, it is obvious from this passage that the teleological method leads to the emphasising of duties

teleology must be *internal*; it must involve an immanent end, in working towards which the members of a scheme are united to one another in a common participation. Now it can hardly be denied that an external teleology creeps into Aristotle's conception of the State. He may regard the full citizens as united to one another in a common participation: he also regards a large class of non-citizens as subsidiary to them, and as means to an end external to themselves. A degradation of those who are not concerned in actively and immediately realising the end is a feature of his political philosophy. So far as the end is an object of active realisation by man, Aristotle tells us that it is a "function". Activity, or "energy," in the direct realisation of the State's function makes a man "part" of the State, or citizen; and those who do not actively aid such a direct realisation are not parts, but necessary material—not citizens, but drudges. Who then are those who actively contribute to that realisation, and who are those who do not? The end or function of the State is moral life: those who have the material wealth and the proper leisure to help forward that moral life are therefore citizens; and the artisan or labourer, who has neither the one nor the other, and cannot therefore contribute to an end demanding both, can never aspire to citizenship. Insistence on a teleological conception thus disfranchises all but the men of means and leisure. This conception is not peculiar to politics. The distinction between the "parts" which actively energise, and the necessary elements which passively contribute, is true of the human body. The anhomœomerous parts, or organs, like hand and foot, actively work, and are citizens, in the polity of the body: the homœomerous parts or tissues, like blood and sinews and bone, passively contribute, and are accordingly disfranchised.¹

We have not yet exhausted the importance of the teleological conception in the field of politics. We have to notice a further development of that conception. To Aristotle the world is not an uncorrelated mass of separate movements towards separate ends: Nature is not episodic, not a number of disconnected scenes, like a bad tragedy. There is to some extent a

The kingdom
of ends

¹ The parallel does not work properly, and there is an important difference, cf. *infra*, p. 280.

according to the exact kind of function they discharge. We shall have one class of States engaged in the pursuit of wealth; another aiming at liberty; a third with virtue for their goal. Nor does the end only give classification: it gives classification in order of merit. States are valued as they approximate to, or recede from, the normal end of virtue. The danger of this method of proceeding, this measuring of the lower by the higher, is, that in assuming the normal to be the natural and real, as he does, Aristotle falls, or seems to fall, into a confusion of the actual and the ideal which is apt to perplex the reader. That he does not also fall into a contempt for the actual, or despise the perverted States of his classification, is due to his knowledge of their working and his respect for existing institutions, which lead him, not to attempt to force perversions into the image of the ideal, but to reform them according to their own principles. But the conception of end is not only useful to the theorist in classification: it is not only the *criterion* used in the study. It serves the practical politician as a *standard* in actual life for the distribution of rewards: exactly as a citizen has actively contributed to the realisation of the function of the State, requital is measured back to him again for his contribution. Such reward or requital is made by the gift of office; and hence the end of the State determines the holders of its offices. As a criterion of classification, and as a standard of distribution, theoretically as well as practically, the conception of end is thus all-important for Political Science.

The conception of end has come before us in many names, and from many aspects. As "form," it represents the shape into which amorphous matter is moulded; as "Nature," it represents identification with that ideal, towards which all movement is directed. As "function," it is that full height of action, to participate in which constitutes partnership in the body politic; while the degree of participation in the function of the State is also the "standard" by which office is distributed. As "essence," the end has already presented itself as the content of definition and the criterion of classification: as "limit," we have still to notice, it determines the character of its means. ^{The end as limit} Limit, a conception so dear to the Greeks in itself, that the infinite and illimitable were to them the synonym of evil,

all the views which we have attempted to bring under its scope. It is actual Greek practice, and contemporary Greek opinion, which form Aristotle's starting-point. It is they which give him his ideas of the proper size and constitution of the State; it is they which supply him with a classification of States; it is they which give him a distinction between subsidiary and disfranchised members of the State, and primary and enfranchised sharers in its life. What he does is to generalise and to rationalise all these data in the light of a doctrine of Final Causes; and in the light of that doctrine he occasionally corrects or modifies the opinions and practices on which his theory is based. But, as it stands, his whole system of thought is informed by a teleological conception of the world; and to that conception, as we have seen, objection may be taken on some of its sides. That is why a revolt against Final Causes marks the beginnings of modern philosophy, a revolt whose champion is Bacon in the sphere of science, and Spinoza in the province of human life. Yet science and politics have returned, and must return, to teleology. Science deals in the conception of organism, and organism, as we have seen, is a conception based on teleology: it is the conception of a whole whose parts can be seen to be "organs" to a common and single end. Nor can the ultimate conception of the State be other than the conception of a whole working for a single end, from which "all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body".

ARISTOTLE'S CONCEPTION OF THE UNITY OF THE STATE

§ 4. So far, we have discussed the influence of Aristotle's teleology upon his conception of the State, and incidentally we have been led to speak of the conception of the State's unity, to which teleology leads. We may now consider more fully his views of the nature of unity, as further determining his conception of the State. We have to speak both of the formal character of the State's unity, as an "association" or "compound," and of its inward and spiritual meaning, as a friendship and society. Aristotle's theory of its formal character comes to light in the beginning of the second book of the *Unity* Aristotle's conception of

the whole be presupposed ; nor can the individual exist as a moral being apart from the presupposition of a State in which he is a part, and which is therefore "prior to him".

Hitherto the unity of the State has been regarded from a formal and external point of view. The *inner* unity of the State, like that of all associations, is to be found in the justice and friendship which unite its members. They give and receive, it may be according to the dictates of a justice which means even-handed requital, it may be in a spirit of generous friendship. In the *Ethics* justice and friendship are closely connected ; but while justice is regarded as needing friendship in addition, friendship is viewed as of itself sufficient for the State in which it is found. *Ubi justitia, ibi amicitia ; et potior amicitia*. But the true spirit of a political association, in Aristotle's general view, is nevertheless justice. Justice is "the political good": defined as a "reciprocal rendering of equal amounts," it is termed the "saviour of the State" (1261 a 30). The life-breath of the State, we may say, is a justice which assures to each his rights, enforces on all their duties,¹ and so gives to each and all their own. Somewhat similarly in the *Republic* Plato had found in justice the harmonising quality, whereby, each "doing his own," the State was kept in equilibrium. Similarly again, in modern times, we find in the State a scheme of rights and duties resting upon justice—that habit of mind which leads us to respect rights and acknowledge duties. Yet behind justice, Aristotle tells us, there always stands friendship. Friendship follows on the feet of justice—and varies as it varies. There is little justice in a perverted State ; and accordingly there is little friendship. There are different forms of justice in different constitutions ; and accordingly there are different forms of friendship. In a State where justice gives much to a small body of rulers, because they deserve much, there is a corresponding friendship as between inferior and superior. Where justice awards equally, there is a friendship of equals. Men do not merely live in a cold region of reasonable acknowledgment of the principle of requital. The relation to their fellows, which such acknowledgment means,

Inner unity
the State:
justice and
friendship

¹ I.e. by giving A a right, and also imposing on him the duty of recognising B's right, and *vice versa*, it enforces "a reciprocal rendering of equal amounts".

the right use of property, and as making for political life and full happiness.

The State has already been described as an association of men for the sake of living well. Each of the subordinate and subsumed associations has its own justice and its own friendship. Aristotle means, by subordinate associations of which he speaks, the connections of husband and wife, of father and child, of brother and sister. In each of these connections there is a justice and a friendship. Husband and wife, for instance, mutually respect and acknowledge duties; and besides this justice, there is between husband and wife a friendship expressed in a common social life. But the family being included in the State, the justice of the family has become a part of the justice of the State: the rights and duties of the members of the family towards one another are guaranteed and enforced by the law of the State. Just because the family is a natural association, with its own justice, which the State has incorporated, not to destroy but to confirm and guarantee, making that association part of itself, and that justice part of its own,—just this reason is the integrity of the family preserved by Aristotle from the destruction with which it was menaced by Plato. Aristotle, indeed, could regard the various family relations as models of the different kinds of States. The relation of husband and wife suggests to him an aristocracy; the husband by the virtue of his merit, and assigns to the wife her due as the rulers in an aristocracy rule by the same title, and exercise their power towards their subjects on the same principle. The relation of father and child suggests a monarchy: that of brother and sister a timocracy, as it is termed in the *Ethics*, or, as it may be called in the *Politics*, a "polity".

ETHICS AND POLITICS

It now remains to discuss the ethical conceptions which Division of
and which dominate, the *Politics*. The *Ethics* and the sciences
form a single treatise in Aristotle's conception, and the
subject of that treatise is political science. We must therefore
ask, first, what is the relation of political science to
ethics in general; secondly, and particularly, how it stands
to ethics. The first book of the *Ethics* begins with a

great number of Greek constitutions. The *Politics* itself is full of references to Greek history; and three of the books, at any rate, which deal with ordinary constitutions, have, along with their practical therapeutics, much that is of the nature of scientific analysis and classification. And, indeed, Aristotle refuses to acknowledge any strict separation of theoretic from practical science.¹ He says, indeed, that practical science aims not at knowledge, but at action; but this is an emphasis of his real point by means of a paradox. And his real point is, that practical science, through knowledge, influences practice, while theoretical science stops at knowledge. But both seek knowledge (253 b 16-18). Knowledge is the prior end even of practical science: that action flows from the knowledge acquired is a great thing—so great, that he sometimes makes it everything—yet it is in a sense secondary. Hence in the *Politics* he contrasts the philosophic treatment of a practical science, aiming primarily at knowledge, with the merely utilitarian (1279 b 13): the latter treatment hardly beseems the magnanimous and liberal soul (1338 b 2).

To understand the full scope of political science, we must now turn to the vertical division, that is to say, to Aristotle's classification of sciences in a hierarchy, one subordinate to another, and all to a common end. Science differs from science

Political
science the
master sci

the dignity of the end it serves: political science is the noblest and most dignified of all practical sciences, because its end is the ultimate end to which all others are subservient, the good of man's life. For in man's action, as we saw implied in Aristotle's teleological conception of the world, there is always an end pursued: each action has its purpose (like each growth of nature), and each purpose is subordinate to the one final and ultimate aim of all action, which is happiness. To act for this end, to act teleologically, is to act rationally: to act rationally, as we shall see, is to act morally. This end behind all ends thus makes morality possible. And as all other ends are subservient to this end, so are all other sciences to its science. Political science is a master-science, "architectonic" in its character, from which all other practical sciences take their cue. Are we then to conclude that ethics, which also discusses the Good, is

¹ Cf. Introduction, p. 6.

politics is normal; and in this respect again the course of modern political science has generally been contrary to Aristotle. Machiavelli, as he is the parent of the modern view of political science as a scientific induction from history, is still more eminently the author of the divorce of politics and ethics. "It is frequently necessary for the upholding of the State to go to work against faith, against charity, against humanity, against religion." That is to say, the divorce appears in the shape of a liberation of the State from any ethical control, and this divorce appears to be confirmed to-day by German, if not by English, political thought. It appears again, in regard to the individual, in the distinction which we make between private and public obligations, between obedience to the dictates of conscience, and obedience to the commands of the State expressed in law. But it must always be remembered that such a distinction is foreign to Aristotle. It is *not* implied in the separation of a treatise on the *Ethics* from the treatise on *Politics*: the same word justice serves Aristotle, as it served Plato, for goodness and law-abidingness, for the virtue of man and the virtue of citizen.

We are now ready to discuss the exact way in which political science, as a practical science with an ethical purpose, works towards the realisation of the end of human life. There are three stages in morality—natural disposition, habitual temperament, and rational action, according as natural instinct, or an external and habituating force, or the internal conviction of reason, dictates and controls our behaviour. We are born good, or we have goodness thrust upon us, or we achieve goodness. But generally we are in the second stage, of an habitual temperament determined by the pressure of external forces, such as the opinion of our family or country, which may indeed have become so inveterate, owing to repeated action in obedience to their dictates, as to be of the nature of internal forces. But even if they be internal, they are not assimilated. We have absorbed them because we must, not because we willed to do so

Stages of
moral growth

when it is *not* pursuing the Ultimate Good. Even in its higher sense, as the science of the Ultimate Good, political science may be said to have two aspects; and while at the beginning of the *Ethics* it regards the Good as social, and looks to the welfare of the State (in whose welfare the individual will share), at the end of the *Ethics* it seems rather to regard the Good as individual, and the State as a means to its realisation in the individual.

the first to conceive, that life was identical throughout organic Nature. But life has its different kinds.¹ There is the life of nutrition and of growth, with which the reproduction of the species is connected; and this, and this alone, is the life in which plants share. There is the life of sensation, involving the power of having images presented and consequently of feeling desire; and this, as well as the life of nutrition, is the life of animals. Lastly, there is the life of reasoning, peculiar to man, but combined in man with the preceding stages of nutrition and sensation, each higher stage always presupposing and containing the lower. But the lower life, when united with the higher, to some extent alters its character under the influence of the higher. Sensation in man is modified by the presence of reason; and the desire which springs from sensation is equally modified by the same influence. And thus, while the function of man is broadly and generally a life in which his complex powers of nutrition, sensation, and reason all come into play, it is specifically and properly a life of reason—not indeed pure reason (that is for higher beings than man), but reason permeating and controlling the physical elements to which it is tied. This is the function of man: this is happiness. Herein is virtue; for virtue consists, as Plato had said, in the proper discharge of function; and therefore the virtue of man lies in a life duly lived in accordance with reason. And so we come to a closer understanding of the work of the State in encouraging virtue. In individual men the reason which should control their being is involved in other elements of appetite and passion. These elements are not, indeed, entirely severed from or antagonistic to reason: reason modifies that with which it is combined, and the appetite of man is not the utter appetite of the beast. It partakes in reason: it hearkens to reason as a son to a father.² None the less, in any human soul reason is always adulterated: it is always mixed with passion. But the State in its ideal form is the vehicle of *pure* reason: the law of the State is reason without passion. Out of its purity the State is strong: in his complexity the individual is weak.

As the science of the Ultimate Good, political science would

¹ *De Anima*, ii., c. 2.

² *Ethics*, 1102 b 30-33.

It has been suggested above that in modern times ethics and politics have been divorced, and that the sphere of ethics has been conceived as the separate sphere of the individual. None the less, we still conceive of the State as inculcating moral laws, and as entering to that extent upon the sphere of ethics. "We differ from Aristotle not in our view of what is fundamentally important to the community, but in the line we draw between things which the State can touch with advantage, and things which it should leave alone."¹ The essential mission of the State is still ethical: whatever else it may do, it is pre-eminently and particularly a moral force. It is the expression of our will, as the doctors of the school of contract taught; but it is further the expression of our moral will, as only one of those doctors, Rousseau, was wise enough to teach. That the State is thus concerned not merely with the life, but also with the good life, of its subjects, is already writ large in the statute book, and would be written larger still, if reformers had their way. It can only be anticipated that the sphere of the State's action will be widened. The old theory which confined the action of the State to the protection of life and property was due to a revulsion of feeling directed, not against the State itself, but against monarchical authority. Whig and Liberal theorists, from Locke downwards, sought to save liberty, not only by trying to liberalise the government, but also by trying to emancipate the individual. In our days the government is liberalised, or at any rate popularised; and as a result there is no distrust, but rather a demand for its action. The emancipation of the individual seems an almost forgotten creed; and our modern danger is rather the opposite excess of collectivism. It seems to be expected of the State that it shall clothe and feed, as well as teach its citizens, and that it shall not only punish drunkenness, but also create temperance. We seem to be returning to the old Greek conception of the State as a positive maker of goodness; and in our collectivism, as elsewhere, we appear to be harking "back to Aristotle".

If the State is, and seems likely to be still more largely, a moral force, political science must always be closely connected with ethics. It is a science, which lacking a terminology of its

¹ Nettleship, *Lectures*, p. 144.

the educative influence of a political authority, and in its *action* in the proper field of its exercise. In a word, the *Ethics* are static in comparison with the *Politics*, the *Politics* dynamic in comparison with the *Ethics*; but both are fundamentally ethical treatises, concerned with the theory of the moral life of man, ἡ περὶ τὰ ἀνθρώπεια φιλοσοφία.

In this account of their relations, however, we are rather sketching the ideal which may have hovered before Aristotle, *Ethics static* *Politics dynamic*, than the actual result which he has achieved. It is tempting to call the *Politics* the dynamics of morality, and to find in its teaching the complement of the statical treatment of the *Ethics*; but it is by no means entirely true. We do indeed find in the *Ethics* something of a progress towards a work on dynamics. Virtue, we soon find, is not achieved without a training in habits: to preach the truth of ethics is a thing of little avail, save for a fine character which Nature has endowed with a love for the "beauty of holiness". All must be trained in their youth: the majority must be coerced into goodness throughout life; fear is their motive, and punishment their spur. It is the training of the young that occupies Aristotle most at the end of the tenth book; and for its perfection he desires the State. Education is best when it proceeds from the State, both because it proceeds from rulers chosen for their goodness, and because it is nothing empirical, but the expression by a legislator, who has grasped the end of life, of the means which conduce to that end. The problem, which the last pages of the *Ethics* raise, is how to produce such a legislator. In words which recall his master Plato, Aristotle complains that the practical politician is an empiric, who cannot train another in his knowledge; and that the political theorist, like Isocrates, is not only unacquainted with practical politics, but also ignorant of what political science is, or with what it deals. The want of any proper treatment of "legislation" (in the sense of determination of the training which makes for a moral life), makes it incumbent upon Aristotle to attempt an inquiry, which shall complete the "philosophy of men". The statics have thus brought us to the door of dynamics. But the dynamics are by no means what we should expect.

In the first place, there is no neat suture of politics and

Difficulties and
discrepancies

ethics. We close the *Ethics* with the feeling, that a State is necessary for the education and habituation of the individual; we open the *Politics* to find that the individual is a part of the State, for which he was meant, in which alone he comes by himself, to which he is "posterior". It follows naturally upon this difference of tone, that while we leave the *Ethics* with the feeling that in the speculative life of each man lies the height and depth and breadth of his being, we begin the *Politics* with the sense, that, the individual being essentially a citizen, his essential life is that of civic action. This difference of spirit suggests of itself that the two courses of lectures were distinct in composition as well as in delivery. In a consecutive course there would have been some adjustment: it was natural not to trouble to tie the ends of thought together, when the two "inquiries" were separate. But the same difference of tone is apparent, not only in this want of adjustment of the beginning of the *Politics* to the end of the *Ethics*, but also in the body of either work. On the one hand, there are some questions which are treated in the *Ethics* in a different way from that in which the same questions are treated in the *Politics*. Particularly is the scheme of constitutions expounded in the *Ethics* different from the classification in the *Politics*. The perverted forms are more unreservedly condemned in the *Ethics*: a constitution called a "timocracy," which is regarded as based upon a property qualification, and as a near neighbour to democracy, apparently takes the place of the later "polity"; and the cycle of constitutional change suggested in the *Ethics* is distinct from any suggested in the *Politics*. Even the vital teaching of the *Politics*, that the State is a natural growth, seems contradicted by the language of the *Ethics*, which assigns to political societies an origin in compact, or more strictly, regards them as "appearing to be by contract". On the other hand, there are some questions treated in the *Politics*, which, judging by the *Ethics*, we should not expect to find treated there, or which, at any rate, we should expect to find treated differently. The marked attention paid in the *Politics* to perverted and non-moral forms of the State is not what we should expect, if the State is to be viewed as a moral institution; and it is perhaps still more striking, that some of the forms, which a perversion like democracy may assume, should

be selected for praise. But, as we have already noticed, Political Science comes to mean something else in the *Politics* than it does at the beginning of the *Ethics*; it becomes a technical practical science, dealing with what is given and with all that is given (normal or abnormal); it loses its character of an ideal moral science, concerned with the nature and production of the highest type of character. Yet whatever the differences between the two, the *Ethics* are indispensable to the full understanding of the *Politics*. However much the argument may assume in its course a practical aspect, it still remains the fundamental characteristic of the *Politics*, that its author treats his subject ideally, from a moral point of view, in terms of ethics. If later generations were to approach that subject through Roman Law, we approached it as decidedly through the moral philosophy of Greece; and our approach to the study of Aristotle's *Politics* must similarly be made through the avenue of Aristotle's *Ethics*.

FORM AND TEXT OF THE *POLITICS*

§ 6. To a modern reader, one of the striking things about the *Politics* is perhaps its form. Equally with the Platonic dialogue the Aristotelian monologue represents thought at work, and not the finished product of thought. The author has not thought out his chapters and his sections: he has not determined exactly what he is going to say in each: still ^{Aristotle's method} as he has made sure, that the view enunciated in one passage is consistent with the view suggested in another. He is working his way to conclusions in the treatise itself. The labour which should precede composition seems to be done in the very article of composition. A subject is dropped, because something said in the course of its discussion suggests a digression, and that another digression; and then it is resumed (if it is resumed at all) from some other point of view, without any attempt to link the second discussion to the first. Each view taken in its contexts, may seem convincing; but to attempt to co-ordinate two views on the same subject, enunciated in two different contexts, may involve violence to the one or the other. And then there are times when no view seems to be reached. Possible or probable solutions are suggested to some question; but each, it is found, has its difficulty, and none may be finally

the opinions of some thinkers, entire rejection. To examine opinion is to see difficulties or inconsistencies, statements that err by excess or defect, or statements that contradict one another. This is the stage of *ἀπορία*, in which thought is involved in an apparent *oul de sac*, from which some escape must be found. And here the second, or *a priori*, element of discussion enters. For Aristotle applies to opinion metaphysical principles of his own, principles elsewhere established, to elicit the deeper meaning of opinion, or to correct its errors. Seldom, if ever, is opinion rejected in the sphere of practical science. It is developed by criticism: its excesses or defects are qualified: its inconsistencies are reconciled by some proof, that either of the two contradictories represents one aspect of truth. The presence of these two elements—received opinion and metaphysical principle—has various results. It makes Aristotle's method of science neither inductive nor deductive, but "a continual and living play between both". It makes his style assume almost the form of a dialogue, in which popular opinion states its case, or previous thinkers urge their views, on the one side, and on the other Aristotle the metaphysician answers. There is a constant dialectic for the eliciting of truth. This is no eristic—no chopping of logic for the sake of confutation; on the contrary, Aristotle seeks to absorb what he can from previous opinion, and, even if he rejects it, to appreciate its better side by showing that its error is half a truth. It is an honest facing and weighing of all possibilities for truth's sake. But dialectic such as this, dialectic which almost leads to dialogue, reminds us naturally of Plato; and the suggestion comes readily, that enough of the spirit of Platonic dialogue had been imbibed, during those years of study under the master, to inspire, not only the exoteric discourses of Aristotle, but also his lectures in the inner school. Nor is the dialectic reminiscent only of Plato; it suggests the very process of the human mind in its normal working. Do we not all bring to the facts we are considering certain general conceptions, to which our experience and temper have brought us, and which we always tend to use as clues to the truth? These conceptions are our principles (*ἀρχαί*): conformity to them means for us the mental satisfaction which we call truth. Nor is the

of its character, just as life is elsewhere considered in its divisions—nutritive, sensitive, rational—in order to attain an understanding of the principle of life in general. In other passages in the *Politics*, analysis is used to distinguish the several attributes of a subject, with the aim of eliminating its essential attribute, and thereby attaining a proper definition. Such an essential attribute is one which is true in every instance of a subject, and true of nothing but that subject. Hence in the third book, in discussing the essential attribute of the State, he dismisses successively the various attributes which his analysis gives—necessary aid to life, alliance, commercial union (c. ix.); habitation in a common city, intermarriage (c. iii.)—because all these are attributes of other things than the State. They are not true of the State specifically; and they are not essential attributes of the State. But the sixth and final attribute, a common interest in a good life, does characterise a State specifically: it is the essential attribute of the State; nor can a State be otherwise defined, than as an association, whose members are united by a common interest in a good life.

Dialectical, aporetic, analytic—such are the characteristics of Aristotle's method. And now it follows, in the light which these considerations furnish, to inquire into the text of the *Politics*, and the proper order of the eight books of which it is composed.¹ A treatise in which terms are carefully analysed, and in which difficulties are raised and considered, but not necessarily solved, suggests of itself the lecturer rather than the author. And such a suggestion receives confirmation from what we know, or can readily guess, of the philosophic schools, which arose at Athens in the fourth century. They depended simply on oral teaching, transmitted orally. A master relied on the living word, and sought to quicken men's minds rather than to leave written monuments. A pupil, who had heard and imbibed the teaching of his master, arose in his own day, to propound the same doctrine with more or less modification, as his greater or less originality suggested. Where the master had been an Aristotle, the divergence of his pupils would be but slight. This oral tradition, transmitted inside the school, would have one fixed and central point, which would preserve continuity

Politics
lecture-note

¹ For the history of the text I follow Shute, *History of the Aristotelian Writings*.

books of the *Politics* which deal with the ideal State, forming as they do a decided exception to the rest in point of style, were published by Aristotle himself. A German critic speaks of the "masterly style" of the former;¹ and Shute points to the set avoidance of hiatus in the latter. No one would speak of the masterly style of treatises like the other six books of the *Politics*, or notice in them any particular avoidance of defects of style. But, apart from any judgment on this ground, we can use two other and perhaps more cogent reasons for regarding the Aristotelian works which we possess as no set compositions. The first is the high opinion entertained by antiquity of Aristotle as a writer, if that opinion may be taken to be represented by Cicero, who again and again praises the "eloquence," the "golden flow," of his style. The second² lies in the fact that Aristotle was at any rate versed in the theory of style. He had lived in an Athens where style was cultivated—where Isocrates taught and practised eloquence, and Plato chiselled his sentences to perfection; and he had put contemporary practice into theory in the *Rhetoric*. But the theory of the *Rhetoric* is not followed—it is consistently violated—by the practice of the *Ethics* and *Politics*. It would seem to follow, therefore, that we must regard the Aristotelian treatises as sets of notes—notes made by Aristotle himself for use in his lectures. As such, they were meant for an audience, which could be assumed, as it is constantly in so many words assumed by Aristotle, to know previously something of the main Aristotelian doctrines. The hearer of the opening lectures on ethics is required to know something of Aristotle's metaphysics, in order to understand his teleological point of view; of his logic, in order to appreciate his criticism of the "Idea of the Good"; and of his psychology, in order to follow his theory of man's highest Good. The same is true of the *Politics*: the political lectures imply a previous knowledge of the Aristotelian system, in the light of which they acquire a deeper meaning; while in every way they would naturally be vivified by a fuller, richer, and more explicit treatment in class.

Publication
Politics

¹The Aristotelian authorship of the *Ἀθηναίων πολιτεία* is, however, dubious.

²Used by Oncken, *Staatslehre*.

into books. They might be divided according to the terms in which they were delivered, or according to the main subjects they treated, but not according to books. The division into books would be made by editors, after the lecture-notes had been published in the form of a book, a form which would naturally suggest such a scheme of division. But if the later editors charged themselves with this function, may they not have ventured on more? May they not have altered the text itself? It is true that the Sullan editors had before them, if not Aristotle's autograph, at any rate the copy belonging to Theophrastus, his immediate successor, which, after having lain in oblivion for some time, had been lately recovered. On the other hand, they would also have the modified version of the Peripatetic school at Athens. It seems possible that if there were any lacunæ or obscurities in the former text, they may have been supplied, or elucidated, from the text of the Peripatetic version. It may be doubted if the respect of modern textual criticism for *ipsissima verba* would then be felt. At any rate the references in our present text, which allude to a past or promise a future treatment of some subject, would certainly appear to have been added by later editors. In the light of these considerations, the problem of the proper order of the books becomes easy. In discussing that problem, we must first ask, what was the order left by Aristotle, and secondly, what was the order adopted by the editors. Now if the *Politics* formed a single body of lectures, it might be expected that there would be a single natural order left by Aristotle himself. But the *Politics* does not seem to form such a single body. There are three sets of lectures, on distinct subjects, in distinct styles. It is important, not only as regards the order of the books, but also for the general understanding of the *Politics*, to realise this division. There is, first, a set of lectures, general and introductory, which lays down the principles of political science and of "economy" as one of its branches (books i. and iii.), and criticises the suggestions of Aristotle's predecessors and the construction of the most generally admired of existing States (book ii.). There is, secondly, a set of lectures practical and detailed (books iv.-vi. in the old order), discussing and classifying the actual constitutions of contemporary Greece; showing

order (whether a further rearrangement of the traditional order should be made in the three books which would now form the end, so that the old fourth should become the sixth, the old sixth the seventh, and the old fifth the eighth book) is perhaps too slight, and too dubious, to be discussed here. It is on the strength of the references that the change has been made; but they cut both ways. Hildenbrand argues that internal logic postulates the old order; and Newman preserves that order, while suggesting that the fourth and sixth books (of the traditional order—the sixth and eighth of the new) formed one treatise, into which the other book was intercalated.

But it cannot be said that even with this re-arrangement the *Politics* forms a complete and logically ordered treatise. It is obvious that the books on the ideal State are by no means finished. Something is said of its foundation: something, but not all that was intended, of its education; but there is little or nothing said of its constitution or of its laws. It may be, as has *Politics un-
finished* been suggested, that Aristotle, sober and practical by nature, soon tired of constructing an imaginary Utopia; or the composition may have been interrupted by other causes. In any case there is a lacuna. There is again a lacuna at the end of the set of lectures on practical politics—at the end of the last book of the *Politics*, in the revised order. One would have expected the discussion of the executive to be followed by a discussion of the judicature and the deliberative: the very words with which the book ends show that it is interrupted, and not finished. Besides these lacunæ at the end of two sets, there is also a large omission in the middle of one. In dealing with practical politics, it might seem that not only the constitution, but also the laws, would naturally have been discussed. In the *Laws* (the work of Plato which in many respects corresponds to this section of the *Politics*) they bulk largely. Aristotle himself had the greatest faith in laws: law, which is reason itself, is to him the only true sovereign. Indeed he practically promises to discuss legislation at the beginning of the three books on practical politics: it is part of political science, and the whole of political science must be fully discussed. There are thus three decided gaps in the *Politics*; and the plan of the whole work, had it ever been completed, would have been somewhat as follows.

arrangements of the ideal State, and nothing at all of its laws. The ideal State is altogether imperfect; and some account of the further stages of education, and of the State's legal and constitutional structure, would naturally have followed.

THIRD SET OF LECTURES

Actual States. The three books relating to these deal only with their constitutional arrangements; and it has been suggested that there is a gap of as many more books, which should have discussed their laws.

(a) The first of the three books which discuss the constitutional arrangements of actual States analyses the existing governments of Greece, and suggests in the light of that analysis what is the best average constitution under actual conditions. It further indicates, in a brief passage, to what sort of populace each of the existing governments is suitable; and then proceeds to prepare the way for discussing the method of constructing these governments, by distinguishing the three powers of government, executive, judicature, and deliberative.

(b) The second of these three books continues the preparation for construction, by discussing what are the causes which ruin or preserve the State in general, and existing States in particular. It is obvious that before one proceeds to construction (by putting the three powers together in various combinations), such a knowledge of preservative and destructive forces is necessary: one must know, for instance, before constructing a democracy, that to combine a democratic form of the executive power with a democratic form of the deliberative power ruins a State, since it makes it too extreme to survive.

(c) The third of these books, naturally, after these preparations, proceeds to the construction to which they were preliminary. It does not, however, construct by suggesting combinations of the three powers, but gives broad principles, both for oligarchy and democracy, based on the conclusions gained in the preceding book, the main principle being, that in forming either constitution, men should be careful of pushing its characteristics to excess. There would naturally have followed next a detailed examination of laws from the same practical and mediatorial point of view; but the examination was never made.

that the State is not made, but develops naturally—that men are not unsociable beings artificially aggregated in a State, but associative creatures naturally meant for political life. In this conclusion the original question disappears, nor is any set solution given to the original difficulty.¹ The whole process of argument affords an instance of the truth, that Aristotle's *Politics* represents, not the finished results of thought, but thought itself at work.

This half-accidental sketch of the origin of the State has to be co-ordinated with brief suggestions made elsewhere, in other contexts, and from other points of view. Any interpretation must therefore be a little tentative; but it may be laid down that Aristotle is convinced, that the origin of the State is not of purpose aforethought, but of "necessity, or, in other words, nature," and that the State is thus natural and necessary, because man is not sufficient to meet his wants by himself. To attain this sufficiency, to satisfy all his wants, material and moral, an inevitable instinct drives man to take unto himself helpmates, first wife and servants, then fellow-villagers, and last of all fellow-citizens, until in the last and widest circle of associates he finds sufficiency, satisfies his wants, and realises himself. His wants have been his salvation: they have been the sting towards progress.² He has been blessed in his discontent: he is finally blessed in the contentment of a rounded life in a civic community. Satisfaction cannot come to man by himself, and in a solitary life: for its attainment he needs and has sought the company of "parents and children and wife, and indeed of friends and fellow-citizens".³ Perfect happiness is not for the solitary;⁴ man is meant for the State, and intended by nature for social life.

What is it, then, that man wants? Like all things, he has a desire towards his end; for all things move towards their final

¹ Filmer laid his finger on this inconclusiveness (*Patriarcha*, ii., c. 3, where he is trying to prove that the State is a great patriarchal family, and attempting, in consequence, to refute Aristotle). "From this argument," he wrote, "nothing doth follow but only this, that conjugal and despotic communities do differ"—the one having generation, the other preservation, for its end.

² Exactly in the same way want (*χρεία*) is conceived to lead men inevitably to form an association (*κοινωνία*) in the *Republic*.

³ *Ethics*, 1097 b 9. ⁴ *Ibid.*, 1169 b 17.

other's goodness.¹ But in addition to the satisfaction which it gives to man's desire for life and his craving for good life, the household satisfies his longing for what Aristotle calls "common life". Man has a simple instinctive liking for society and companionship, quite apart from their serving economic or moral ends. His faculty of speech, it would seem, is not only the basis of justice; it is also an impulse towards good fellowship and sociability. And there is this pleasure of "common life" in the household, in the companionship of husband and wife, of parent and child. But with all the various facets which it presents, the household is not sufficient for man. It is absolutely necessary to him, Aristotle confesses: it must not be rejected, as it was by Plato, in favour of the larger association of the State; it must be retained—but as part of a larger whole. Neither materially nor morally can it altogether satisfy man's wants. He needs a greater supply of the things of this world than it can give; nor is the moral influence of the household sufficient; there is needed greater impartiality, and greater force, than can be found in paternal rule. The household must thus broaden into a village, for the greater satisfaction of man's wants (chiefly, one feels, of his material wants); but for their ultimate satisfaction, the circle must widen once more into the final association of the State, in which man finds his moral needs, as well as his material wants, completely realised.

The village arose by a natural extension of the household. The village It was an association of several households, oftenest formed by the natural growth of a single one, and by the despatch of several colonies (as it were) from the parent hearth. The rule of the parent hearth would be exercised over the colonies: the village was a little monarchy, and when the city arose by a federation (*συνοικισμός*) of different villages, its government was monarchical, by a natural imitation of that of the villages. As a wider association, the village was naturally able to supply new needs—not merely those of insistent daily recurrence, but also those of a more occasional character, like festivals or sacrifices. As it satisfies material needs more fully, so it also affords a wider society; while the authority of the parent hearth will be exercised with greater impartiality, and backed by a greater

¹ *Ethics*, viii., 12, § 7 (1162 a 25-27).

One might put Aristotle's teaching in a single phrase: in ^{The State a wider self} the State man has gained his full self. It is easy to think of self as a solitary something inside four walls, with all its interests, thoughts and aims equally isolated. But it is essentially false. (A man's self is the complex of his interests. He makes a part of himself anything with which he "identifies himself". A political club, a literary society, or a cricket eleven may be essential parts of a man's self. To cultivate as many interests as possible, to present as many facets to life as possible, is to attain the fullest possible self. Now a man who has "identified himself" with a State, so that his inmost self is pained with its pain (like the younger Pitt), has broadened that self to an extension which, in Aristotle's conception, is the ultimate. To Aristotle, indeed, the process appears not so much a *broadening* of human interests, as a *supplementing* of human defects: but fundamentally his conception is the same—man finds his full self in the State. In the developed city he attains all things—life; society (or common life); morality (or good life). But what he particularly finds—and what is the real truth of the State and its essential purpose—is moral life. The State does not exist for life, as a species of military alliance for common protection, or as an economic union (though it is incidentally such an alliance or union); it does not exist for the sake of society, or as an association of friends (though again, as is shown by the connections of kinsmen and neighbours, and the religious and social gatherings, which are to be found in the State, it is incidentally such an association): it is specifically and essentially a communion of households and villages in a moral life—in a completed and entirely self-sufficing existence.

On all that has been said the natural character of the State inevitably follows. (i.) It is natural because it is the conclusion of a process of human development, in which each step is necessary and natural, the outcome not of human purpose but of ^{The State natural} human instinct (*ὁρμή*) struggling towards its goal, while the whole is marked by unbroken continuity from beginning to end. As the conclusion of such a process, the State is still more natural than any preceding step in the process. The end of a process is more particularly "by nature," as the nearest ap-

another the expedient and inexpedient, the just and the unjust. From speech comes justice, and justice is the basis of the State.

“Justice is bound up with the State; and adjudication, which is the determination of justice, forms an institution of political society.” In other words, the due administration of justice The State based on reason

requires the impartial authority of a civic tribunal, as Locke afterwards argued that the need of an impartial judicature, administering a uniform law with the aid of a strong executive, dictates the creation of the State. In this passage Aristotle would appear to regard the negative or punitive aspect of the moralising influence of the State, rather than its positive and educative work. For, he urges, without a restraining force, man would only use the faculties which give him his superiority over the beasts to be still worse than they. He is born with faculties like speech, which prudence and virtue should employ, but which vice may wrest from their grasp to use for opposite ends. And in that case the superior faculties of man give him a superiority even in vice. Not only therefore do man's faculties for good need a State to elicit their powers; his capacities for evil make a State indispensable to prevent their consequences. The view of human nature here suggested reminds one of Machiavelli or Hobbes: man appears to be utterly bad, and the State seems meant to bit and bridle his passions. But this is not really the Aristotelian conception of human nature or the province of the State. Man is naturally born with a disposition to virtue: the work of the State is to train the disposition in a habit of regular action. The function of the State is positive: it exists not so much to repress evil as to encourage good. It is a school rather than a court of law: it is an association of friends mutually provoking one another to virtue, rather than a union of repressive rulers and rebellious ruled.

From all of this, and particularly from these last considerations, it results that the State is absolutely necessary to man, and that without it he can do nothing. Without the supply of his material wants which it affords, he sinks back towards the beast Answer to Cynics and Sophists

truly united in a life of reason. The State, based as it is on reason, is the expression of the highest part of man; while the household, based more particularly on the senses, is a lower and more animal stage, at which man cannot rest, because he is a reasoning being.

enforced, as against the passion that is also within him, by the association into which he has grown. Its government does not represent a privileged section, using its powers to the promotion of its own selfish interests; it consists of those whose merits have justly been rewarded by the right to use a power, which they exercise for the advantage of the whole community—a power which has been awarded to them for their virtue, and which they employ to further the ends of virtue, and thereby the ends of the State. In all this one sees a rehabilitation of the majesty of the State, undermined by the individualism of the Sophists, the hedonism of the Cyrenaics, and what may be called the Stoicism of the self-sufficing Cynic. Nor had it only been undermined in theory. Professional armies had superseded the city militia: Demosthenes is ceaselessly rebuking the Athenian's want of patriotism for Athens: civic virtue seemed to be dead. New life must be poured into the city: a "revival" must begin, which should rejuvenate Greece. Athens had her reformers busy with this task, at the time when Aristotle was writing the *Politics*; and his rehabilitation of the theory of the State went side by side with their attempts at a practical renovation of the old glories of the fifth century or of Solon. It was natural that he should warn the Greeks of his time not to be carried away by false philosophies, nor to grow slack in their devotion to the city whereof they were citizens. That city was indispensable to their independence: it had grown up around them because it was. Fashionable philosophies might decry its claims; politics might be uninteresting and even sordid. None the less the State, which had given all, claimed from every man the use of his best faculties in its cause: it could permit no man to retire into the solitude of a Cynic's tub. What was bad in actual States might be bettered: a new government by the middle classes might here and there arise to remedy social discontent; somewhere across the seas, a colony might be born, where the ideal itself should be realised.

Not only was Aristotle, in the opening of the *Politics*, speaking words charged with a meaning for the Greece of his time; he was also, in the sketch which he gives of the development of the State, generalising from the Greek history

of the past. In Greece there had been a development from village-communities to city-states, which were formed by the grouping of villages together, "for the sake of life," around some central citadel. The change from life in scattered villages to life in a central city was often promoted by kings, who induced the various villages over which they had naturally come to rule, either by conquest, or as a result of expansion from an original nucleus, to gather round the royal fortress. In Attica particularly we find at an early date unions of villages, not indeed directly into the larger unity of Athens, but into subsidiary groups, which were in their turn united in the "city" of Athens. Thus Marathon and three other villages united themselves into a tetrapolis: the Four Villages of which Peiræus was the chief united at an early date in the common cult of Heracles. At a later date the city which had been formed around the acropolis of Athens conquered these subsidiary groups, and gave their members full franchise in Athens. Henceforth the city-state of Athens extended over the whole of Attica, a country as large as an average English shire. Of the action of kings in forming cities, of the influence of religion as a bond between villages, we hear little or nothing in Aristotle. He knows that early cities were under kings, and he mentions sacrifices as one of the elements of the social life of a State. It is perhaps something of an omission that he should not have stopped to consider the influence of religion in the genesis of the State. To have shown that even that act of man in which he is most individual, his worship of his God, is an act which he is naturally impelled to do in company with others, would only have strengthened his case. And religion was one of the most essential elements which went to form a city: the units which made a city "always lit a sacred fire and gave themselves a common religion".¹ The unity of the city was religious as well as political: Athens had Athene as the sign and symbol of herself.

In conclusion we may notice that the view of the origin of society propounded by Aristotle is a patriarchal view.² It is true that he does not speak very definitely of a *potestas*; but the father of a household (as we learn partly from the *Politics*

¹ De Coulanges, *La Cité Antique*, p. 143.

² Cf. the patriarchal view suggested in the *Laws*, *supra*, pp. 190-91.

is the end of its citizens' activities, as Aristotle everywhere assumes, it must be a system of which they are the organs or instruments. Its function must be the function to which their separate functions are all so many contributions; its life must be the life in which they all partake, and by partaking in which they have any life of their own.

In such an organic unity it is necessary, first, that there should be a differentiation of organs, each performing a separate function; and, secondly, that each organ should be absolutely dependent upon the whole to which it belongs for its life. Now the conception of the State as an association contains both of these features. As an association, it is composed of dissimilar parts, mutually supplying each the deficiencies of the other, and all combining to realise the end of a full and self-complete existence. As an association, therefore, it is also indispensable to its members, who absolutely depend upon it for the full and self-complete existence which they can only attain by participation in its life. Putting these two propositions together, we may say that as an association, the State is a system of different organs, which by their membership of the system attain a fulness of life otherwise impossible. So far, the individual is dependent upon the State for his *fulness* of life; but Aristotle goes further, and lays it down that he is dependent upon the State for his *very life*. This he does in a comparison, or rather an absolute assimilation, of the State to the human body, and of its citizens to the bodily organs. Because the individual is not full and complete (*αὐταρκής*) without the State, Aristotle assumes that he stands to it in the relation of an organ to the body, the bodily organ and the citizen being *equally and in the same degree* insufficient without the body to which they belong.¹ The individual is not only dependent upon the State; he is dependent upon it as absolutely as a

The State
organic as a
association

tote, for he rejects the Platonic Idea of the Good, and regards the scheme of human life, directed towards the human good, as self-subsistent and ultimate. (At the same time the idea of God as the Final Cause, if pushed to its consequences, would involve the Platonic conception: the State would become an "organ" to God.)

¹As Newman points out, the degree of dependence of the individual upon the State is by no means necessarily the same as that of the member upon the body. The *equality* of the two dependencies (*ὁμοίως ἔχει*, 1253 a 27) is simply assumed.

hand or foot is dependent upon the body. He exists only in its life, and has no meaning or existence except as sharing in its life.

This conclusion Aristotle states in the proposition, that "the State is prior to the individual". One thing is prior to another when it has first to be present to the consciousness in making a definition of that thing. A right angle is in this sense prior to an acute angle, and a circle to a semi-circle: they are the wholes which must be present for a definition of their parts. And so in every case; you cannot define a finger or a foot, except by the whole body of which it is a part. To define man therefore involves, as precedent, the idea of the State, to which he is related as part to whole. Nor must the whole only be prior if the part is to be *defined*: it must be present as a prior condition if the part is to *exist* at all.¹ A hand which is not the hand of a body is not a hand at all: it bears the same name, indeed, but that is by an accident of nomenclature, such as gives a key and a collarbone the same Greek word (*κλεις*). And the reason why a hand cannot exist apart from the body is that everything is what it is, because, and so long as, it discharges its due function.² The due function of the hand being to minister to the body, a hand cannot be a hand except when it is part of the body, and able to discharge its work. From all of which it follows, as regards man and his relation to the State, that he can only properly be defined as *πολίτης* (for man as man is a citizen³); that he can only exist so long as he discharges a function which consists in contributing to the State; and that, finally, for both of these two reasons, the State is prior to the individual. This "priority" is, of course, consistent with posteriority in time: in time the individual comes before the State,⁴ though philosophically the State is to-day a prior and presupposed condition of his definition and very existence.

This conception of the State as an organism like the body reappears elsewhere in Aristotle. We are told, for instance,⁵ that the exaggeration of any feature of a constitution (for in-

¹ οὐδὲ γὰρ εἶναι δύναται (sc. τὰ μέρη) χωριζόμενα (sc. τοῦ συνόλου) (*Met.*, 1035 b 23).

² *Pol.*, 1253 a 22-24.

⁴ See before, p. 224.

³ I.e., *humanitas* = *civitas*: see before, p. 225.

⁵ *Pol.*, 1309 b 21-31.

stance, the exaggeration of liberty in a democracy), is as great a defect as the exaggeration of any feature of the body. In an organism each organ must always have its appointed and limited size. To exaggerate any part of the body will result in its losing its due proportion as a part, and finally even in its losing its own character, as a result of the excess to which it has been pushed and the deficiency in all the counterbalancing parts. Nor is it otherwise in a democracy: liberty pushed to an excess will be degraded into licence, for the lack of any counter-balancing order. We can only agree with the lesson which this analogy points: it is less easy to agree with another Aristotelian view, which the analogy of the human body seems to suggest. In regard to the human body, Aristotle distinguishes between integral and contributory parts—between parts which share in the *full* life of the whole, and parts which are the *conditions*, and indeed the indispensable conditions, of that life, but do not themselves share in its activity. Integral parts are organs like the hand or foot: contributory or conditional parts are elements, or constituents like blood, bones, or sinews. Much the same distinction is made within the State. In classifying its parts, Aristotle distinguishes the parts or classes which are integral, and share in its full life and activity, from those which are contributory, and only serve as conditions of that activity. The former are the military, judicial, sacerdotal, and deliberative classes; the latter the cultivators, artisans, labourers, and traders. In the life of the State, which is a moral life, the former have the time and the capacity to share; and because they can share in the life, they are the only citizens known to the constitution. The latter classes, however, have neither time nor capacity to participate in the moral life, or, consequently, to become citizens. Their function is the provision of wealth, of means to that moral life which is the destined end of the State; but between means and end there can be no community, nor can there be any real union between the providers of means and the achievers of the end. The distinction which is thus made within the State is compared by Aristotle himself to the distinction which reigns in all natural wholes;¹ but the comparison with the human body in par-

¹ See before, p. 234, on "wholes"; and for the particular conception, pp. 227, 407, 418.

lays almost an excess of emphasis on the truth which is needed to counteract current errors. But the normal and regular Aristotelian doctrine stops short of being fully organic: it does not lose the individual's life in that of the State, though it fully recognises the necessity of the State to the individual's life. Man, as having his nature supplemented by the State, rather than the State as controlling man's every faculty, is the pivot of his thought. The State is an organic growth¹—but man co-operated in the growth, and man can modify its character: man is inevitably knit to man, and to the whole society in which he lives—but it is for the achieving of his own “independence” that he becomes dependent on others.

THE END OF THE STATE

§ 3. It naturally follows upon what has been said of the teleological method of Aristotle, to discuss more fully than has hitherto been done the end of the State, and to inquire more closely into its relation to the end of the individual. We have seen that the end of the State is good life. In a wider sense, indeed (it is admitted in the third book), mere life, which has a certain goodness of itself besides its natural pleasure, and social life, with all its attractions, are also ends towards which man is drawn; and those who contribute towards these ends are competitors for the rewards which the State has to offer—the rewards of office and dignity and honour, which in justice the State must confer upon those who have done most to realise the ends of its own life and action. But in a more exclusive and specific sense, good life alone is the end of the State: the State is a spiritual association in a moral life. No union

¹ The term organism is generally used to-day, not merely as meaning a system of *ὄργανα* (in which sense it has here been used), but as also meaning a living system, which has grown, and has a principle of life in itself. In this fuller sense the State is “organic” to Aristotle, because it is natural. Things natural, as we have seen, are things possessing in themselves a source of motion—things which develop from within, as the result of an immanent force. As such a natural thing, the State has its own life, and it has grown. At the same time, Aristotle does not push this view, as Burke did, into a conservative antipathy to human interference: his whole conception of political science, as a practical and remedial thing, postulates human action. Yet on the other hand Aristotle could justify slavery, as Burke could defend rotten boroughs: the sense of the State as a living system due to development tends to over-conservatism, as the sense of the State as a mechanism created by contract leads to excessive innovation.

as prominently in Aristotle's pages, is slavery. The slave is a necessary instrument, like other kinds of wealth, for the moral life. It must be remembered that he is an instrument, after all, for a high purpose, and that, by being used as an instrument in such a service, he receives a moral benefit himself. Yet though one may seek to be fair to the whole conception of life indicated by this philosophy, one cannot but admit, that it is the conception entertained by an intellectual aristocracy (which would fain be also a political aristocracy) of itself, and of its possibilities and its necessities. Its flower would have been a fine manhood fully open; but many a life must have gone before, like autumn leaves, to fertilise the ground. It was natural that philosophers should set before the youth of Greece who came to their lectures such an ideal: these young men had the instruments—the wealth, the slaves, the leisure—and it was much to tell them that these things were to be used as instruments in a high work. But a wider thinking was necessary, which should propound an ideal that needed no instruments upon which all men could not count, and which above all made no man a mere instrument to the welfare, even if it were the moral welfare, of another.

This being, then, the conception of man's happiness—a life of virtue furnished with the conditions of virtuous action—it remains to ask whether the best life of a political society, "the happiness of the State," was after the same pattern. The answer is (i.) that a State like any individual must show virtue, and the same virtues as those which a man must show; it must show courage, and self-control, and justice; (ii.) that inasmuch as man's happiness springs from and is proportionate to his virtue, it follows that the State, having the same virtues as those of the individual, will, provided that its happiness springs from and is proportionate to its virtues, be happy or attain the best life, in the same way as the individual. But the happiness of a State does spring from its virtue: "the more virtuous State is the more happy". The conclusion which we attained in regard to the individual is therefore true of the State: its happiness, or best life, is a life of virtue properly furnished.

(i.) The identification here made of the virtue of the individual with that of the State, and consequently of the happiness

State is different from that of the individual. Of one State, however, this conclusion is untrue. In the ideal State *every* citizen is ultimately a full ruler; in it, therefore, every citizen must ultimately show the quality of moral wisdom, which is the essence of a good man; and in it, accordingly, the virtue of the State is exactly the same as that of the individual. Of any other State than the ideal, however, the conclusion remains true, that the virtue of the State is distinct from that of the good man. But such a conclusion, though logical, is perhaps too precise. After all, the virtues of the good man, virtues of courage and self-restraint and justice, are the same in kind as those of the ordinary good citizen, though the good man has the additional quality of moral prudence directing his acts of self-restraint and justice. Further, though the truly good man has moral wisdom, we may speak of a "good man," meaning only a person habitually acting in obedience to the moral enactment of the State. A good man in this lower sense is exactly the same as a good citizen: the virtue of the individual is the same as that of the State. Thus a rough identification may be retained between the virtue of the individual and the virtue of the State; though strictly and properly, a truly good man is not good in exactly the same way as the ordinary good citizen, or, therefore, as the association of citizens, the State. Yet even such a rough identification becomes impossible in a State which does not pursue a moral purpose, but has made wealth its aim and goal. In such a State, to be a good citizen is simply to seek and to accumulate wealth; and, consequently, in such a State, the good citizen would be a bad man, and the good man a bad citizen. One feels about the whole discussion that it is a little unreal, after the teaching of the first book, that man is not self-complete without the State, and still more after the suggestion of that book, that man only exists and is man, in so far as he is a citizen. But Cynic teaching had made familiar the contrast between man, as an independent moral agent, and the State of which he was a member; and Aristotle, after having combated, unconsciously reverts to that antithesis.

(ii.) From the virtue we now turn to the happiness of the State and the individual. It is the same, Aristotle says in the *Ethics*, as he also says in the *Politics*; but there is a wider and more

Happiness of State same as that of an individual

States imperially. Whether it be illogical or no, it is perhaps impolitic: it is hard for *imperium et libertas* to be yoke-fellows, and empire abroad may involve a strong hand at home, in the place of constitutional liberty (1333 b 33). There are, indeed, Aristotle suggests, countries meant to be ruled by the stronger: and it would indeed appear as if countries like India or Egypt were meant for the foreign direction, by which they have for so many centuries been guided. But though an empire may occasionally be natural, Aristotle holds that empire is by no means necessary to the welfare of a State; and he therefore inclines to the "philosophic" life, the life of internal development in the paths of virtue. If the apostles of the militant life object to such a State that it is inactive and stagnant, there is an answer ready. As Pericles said, it is possible to have a philosophic life without falling into slackness. Though the whole may not "act" in reference to other wholes, the parts of the State may "act" with reference to one another. God Himself is not active: if He moves the world, it is by attraction, and not by action; yet God is supremely happy in His life of contemplation of Himself, and His own thought. If this be the happiness of God, it follows *a fortiori* that a self-centred State may be happy.

But should an individual be practical and political, as Gorgias had taught, or should he, like Anaxagoras, withdraw himself behind the veil, and live for thought? It is certainly the supreme aim of man to live according to reason, which is the highest and most peculiar part of his nature. But reason is twofold. It is practical, in so far as it is its work to direct action in accordance with what is right; it is theoretical, in so far as it is its function to bring thought into conformity with truth.¹ To which side of his reason shall a man give preponderance? Upon Gorgias' view, it would follow that every man, since his conception of happiness was the practical life of politics, should eagerly contend for office. But, as a matter of fact, office is for those to whom it is due: it goes to the man whose merit demands reward, and whose capacity invites trust; and there must be many who are not chosen. A practical life of politics cannot therefore be the general ideal; and Aristotle comes to the conclusion, that the ideal life is one

The practical
and the
philosophic life
the individual

¹ *Pol.*, 1333 a 24 sqq. ; cf. *supra*, p. 238.

of activity, indeed, but of intellectual activity.¹ It is an activity that does not express itself in external action, or involve relation to others: it is the activity of processes of thought and reflection, pursued not for any ulterior satisfaction, but for their own immediate gratification. And Aristotle indulges in the apparent paradox that thought never resulting in overt action by the thinker is in itself the highest form of action; for, even in the sphere of overt action, is not the mere thought of an architect more truly active than the hands which build, and may we not go further and urge, that pure thought, even when never translated into overt action, is always the higher form of action? From all of which one gathers, that man may either find his happiness in a political life, in exercising constitutional authority over his fellows (and so becoming like those States which exercise a just authority over other States); or, if his capacities are not for such a life, he may look for happiness to a philosophical life of active thought. Not indeed that the two are mutually exclusive alternatives: on the contrary, active thought on the deepest of moral questions is necessary to the political life, and the statesman is a philosopher as well as a politician. Nevertheless, in this emergence of the individual as finding his happiness in contemplation, one seems to see a divergence from the moral and political atmosphere of the first book. Man as a political animal somewhat recedes: man as a thinking being comes more prominently forward. There is no necessary contradiction: at all times Aristotle contemplates the activity of thought as the specific goal of man, in virtue of that reason which differentiates him from the beasts. Nor is anything said in the discussion of the ideal State, which indicates that any man can dispense with the State, as the Cynics, who pushed the conception of man as an essentially rational being to its furthest extreme, were disposed to think. Aristotle only says that it is not every man who can be, or need be, a politician; he does not say that any man can dispense with the

¹ Cf. for this answer the tenth book of the *Ethics*, c. vii. The pleasure of "contemplation" is there argued to be most intense and continuous; to possess most *αὐτάρκεια*; to be alone loved for itself; and to be the only pure employment of leisure. Contemplation (c. viii.) is the happiness of gods; and men are happy, in so far as they have something of the divine energy.

necessity of being "a political animal". None the less there is a slightly different atmosphere, as of a separate treatise,¹ not rigidly co-ordinated with the rest of Aristotle's political deliverances. It is easy to believe that here there is an unconscious gliding into Hellenism; and that something of that withdrawal upon the inner life, which followed upon the death of the city-state, already casts its shadows on the pages of Aristotle. But the same wavering between an active and strenuous life in the State, and the life of the philosopher who by contemplation identifies himself with the whole world, is already apparent, as we have seen, in Plato. The philosopher, looking at the world, can readily see that the State is one of its schemes, and each of us part of it; but he feels that to look at the world is in itself a thing transcending all other things, and he easily forgets *what* he has seen, when he thinks of the bliss of the *seeing*. In that feeling, and that forgetting, the organic relation of the individual to the State may readily disappear.

On the whole, we may say in summary, there is in Aristotle an identification of the State and the individual. As a self-contained ethical society, the State lives the same life as the individual: like him, it acknowledges a moral law, and like him it forces itself (its members) to conform to that law. It has the same end, and it attains the same happiness in pursuing that end. Man, acting as a member of a group, is no other than man acting as a separate unit: he and his fellows who together form the State have the same virtues and aims and satisfactions as a group of beings, which they have as separate beings. It is the old thesis of Plato, that the virtues of the State are the virtues of the individual writ large. The thesis is somewhat modified by Aristotle, but it is modified in a direction, which is not inconsistent with Plato's thought, and is, indeed, implied in the *Republic*.² We learn that in acting as members of groups, men are conditioned by the place they occupy in the group, and by the character of the group to which they belong; and conditioned in this way, their virtue must fall short of the "absolute" virtue of full and free self-direction towards an ideal end, which belongs to the good man who acts simply and absolutely without such limitations. Only in one case will the

Identification
of State and
individual

¹ Cf. *supra*, p. 257.

² Cf. *supra*, p. 116, n. 1, and p. 118.

CHAPTER VII

[*Politics*, III., c. i.-viii. ; VI. (IV.), c. iii.-iv.]

THE STATE AS A COMPOUND

THE UNITS OF THE COMPOUND

§ 1. **T**HE teleological method must necessarily enter into any definition of the nature of the State. We have already seen that every true definition must be teleological: an axe must be defined by its function of chopping, and in the same way the State must be primarily defined, as an "association of households and villages sharing in a life of virtue, and aiming at an end which consists in perfect and self-complete existence". Such a definition has been implied, and practically stated, in the discussion of the origin and aim of the State with which we were occupied in the last chapter. But the definition of the State may also be approached from another point of view. We may regard the State as a compound, and attempt to define its nature by determining the character of its component parts, and the scheme of composition by which they are united in a single whole. Instead of the teleological we may use the analytic method, resolving the State into its elements; and we may then employ a method of synthesis for reuniting the elements which we have previously distinguished and defined. The use of the analytic method, as we have seen, already appears at the beginning of the First Book of the *Politics*. There, however, Aristotle regards the village and the household as the constituent elements which go to form the State. In the Third Book, in which a definition of the State is attempted, it is the individual citizens who appear as its component parts; and the definition of the State is therefore preceded by a definition of the nature of a citizen. Beginning with this definition

Though democratic in its scope, it was still true of Greece as a whole in Aristotle's time: "the size of the modern State," he says elsewhere, "would seem to make any other than a democratic State almost impossible". And hence it is not without justice that Aristotle bases his general view of citizenship upon the practice of democracy. There are, however, States of which this view is not true. Such States have assemblies consisting not of the whole people, but only of certain summoned members; and in these the judicature is not popular, but consists of small sectional bodies. These States, of which Sparta is an example, are of an oligarchical character, and for them a separate definition of citizenship is necessary. It is still true that in them any man is a citizen who shares in deliberative or judicial office, but it must be added that such office is not open to all, or held for an indeterminate time: it is confined to a few, and limited in duration. Having thus defined the citizen, we may now define, to a certain extent, the State. A State, we may say, is a body of men, sharing in deliberative and judicial office, and sufficient in number for a self-sufficient existence. That a share in the exercise of deliberative and judicial powers should be made the touchstone of the citizen is natural; for Aristotle regards these two functions as the essential functions of the State. Accordingly those who discharge them are the essential or integral parts of the State, and, as such, the only full and true citizens. Particularly is a share in the discharge of the deliberative function necessary to a citizen. The deliberative is "supreme over the constitution"; in it resides the sovereign authority, and in that authority the full citizen must share.

To Aristotle, therefore, citizenship means direct participation in the exercise of sovereignty. It does not mean, as it means to-day, the right to share in the election of the sovereign. Every citizen will, indeed, in Aristotle's conception, have a right to join in the election of the executive; but then the executive is not the sovereign; it is the servant of law, and its election is no great matter. To be a citizen is to be a direct part of the active sovereign; it is not merely, as it is with us, to be a part of the sovereign behind the scenes, who determines and controls the visible sovereign. The difference is due to the small extent of the city-state, which involved, as its inevitable

Citize
prima

merely disqualified by want of leisure: they are in a sense servile. They stand to the community, which they provide with its necessities, as the slave stands to his master. They are as it were the Sudra caste, on which the Brahmin must depend, but over which he must rule. In ancient times, Aristotle adds, the labourer and the mechanic were actually slaves or aliens; and most of them were still in that position in his own day. Their disfranchisement was therefore an historical fact¹ which he accepted with his usual conservatism, as he accepted slavery itself, and for which he found a philosophical justification, as he did for slavery. Accordingly the working classes sink, in his philosophy, into the "conditions" of a State of which they cannot be "parts". The view is repellent: it lowers the workers of a community into the community's slaves. But it was the general view of the Greeks, a view against which the only revolters were the Radicals, who revolted against everything—against slavery, against the social position of women, and against social conventions in general—and taught in opposition the natural equality of man. Of these Euripides is the exponent, and a famous passage of the *Orestes* introduces the yeoman, who tills his farm with his own hands and without slaves, as the only salvation of the land—shrewd, and ready to come to close quarters in discourse; pure, and of blameless life. But this half-English figure is contrary to Greek ideas: the Sudra rather than the yeoman is the true parallel for Greece.

So far, Greek citizenship has been contrasted with modern as wider in the privileges it conferred, and consequently narrower in the number it admitted to those privileges. We have seen that it was connected with primary government, and that representative institutions and secondary government form the differentia of the modern State. To the Greek, citizenship was thus already a higher thing than it can be to-day; and what is true of the Greek is here also true of the Roman of Republican times. But the absence of any religious organisation, co-extensive with (or wider than) the State, still further

Modern citizenship less intense, though more extensive

¹ But in a democracy labourers (*θῆτες*) were often citizens; and Aristotle's definition of citizenship, however democratic, is therefore more exclusive than the ordinary definition of democratic practice.

control of the mistress city—a life separate enough to give them a sense of individuality, and yet dependent enough to make them resent the suppression of that individuality. It was this want of any principle of cohesion for larger units than the city, which, as much as anything, proved the ruin of the Greek State. Federalism might have proved such a principle; but though there had been instances of federation before the time of Aristotle, they had been of a loose kind, and the “Federal Revival” first begins many years after his death, in the reconstitution upon a new basis of the Achæan League. Except through federation, which Aristotle never discusses, the expansion of the Greek city was thus impossible; and Aristotle could consequently regard the city as the final form of association. The modern State has no exacting conception of citizenship to bar its expansion; but even in the modern State expansion has come not through the extension of citizen rights to a wider sphere, but through the widening of the sphere of *allegiance* to a sovereign.¹ The idea of a personal tie to a personal monarch has served to bind, not only conquered populations to their conqueror, but also distant colonists to their mother country.² It is an idea essentially feudal, as the word allegiance of itself indicates: it is the idea which underlies the British Empire to-day. Common allegiance to the Crown, not common citizenship issuing in the election of a common parliament, is the basis on which it rests. This conception of allegiance, over and above citizenship, is still, in most countries, a differentia of the modern from the ancient State. It supplies a new political motive, that of loyalty, which is for many, even in a constitutional monarchy, the one motive of political action. It is the motive of sentiment; and in a monarchy, “the sentiment of honour in the subject often takes the place of the political virtue of the citizen as the inspirer of the noblest actions”.³ In summary,

Citizen and
“subject”

¹ Rome was able to expand, even with the Greek conception of citizenship; but her expansion ultimately involved the person of an emperor for its expression.

² Allegiance, defined by Coke as “a true and faithful obedience of the subject due to his sovereign,” was held by the judges in Calvin’s case (1608) to be limited to no spot—*nullis finibus premitur*. Unlimited in space, it was also held to be indefeasible in point of time—*nemo potest exuere patriam*. But this doctrine has been modified by recent legislation, especially the Naturalisation Act of 1870.

³ Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois*, book iii., c. vi.

therefore, it may be said that the idea of citizenship has been altered since the time of Aristotle, not only by the development of representative institutions and the growth of a separate religious organisation, but also by the gift which feudalism gave (but which the Roman Empire had already anticipated) of a personal loyalty to the head of the State.¹

creation of
citizens

We must now return from this contrast of modern conceptions of citizenship with those of Aristotle, to Aristotle's own further development of the subject of citizenship. We have as yet seen citizenship defined by function: he is a citizen, we have been told, who does civic work. There is, however, a rival definition, which leaves function and defines by birth, following the ordinary practice of actual politics. But to define a citizenship as a man born of citizen parents is not to define, but only to push the *definiendum* a stage further back. What made the parents citizens? Gorgias had answered this question by a pun. Greek magistrates were in many places called "makers," *δημιουργοί*; and, taking advantage of this name, he had said, that as mortar-makers made mortar, so the Larissæan "makers" made citizens of Larissa. But to explain who made a citizen is not to explain what a citizen is, any more than one explains mortar by saying that it is what the mortar-maker makes. Definition must always be by final cause: "all things are defined by their function and capacity". An interesting question does indeed arise with regard to the making of citizens: are the citizens newly admitted after a revolution to be regarded as true citizens? But in discussing such a question we enter upon new ground. We leave the problem of defining what a citizen is, to determine whether certain men (who, as discharging the functions of citizens, should certainly, in Aristotle's opinion, be called citizens) have or have not properly acquired that title. When Cleisthenes, after the revolution which expelled the tyrant Hippias, enrolled in the tribes,

¹ It may be added that under the Roman Empire the idea of a citizen as a member of a free self-governing community gave way to the conception that citizenship meant: (1) a personal status and private rights guaranteed by law; (2) membership of a local *municipium* and its government. This conception has largely entered into modern citizenship, which means a personal status and a local membership; but an English citizen has political rights, like the franchise, which bring him nearer to the Greek *πολίτης* than to the *civis Romanus* of the empire. Cf. Matheson, *Intern. Journ. Eth.*, viii., 22.

as full citizens, both aliens and slaves, was his action altogether valid? Aristotle assumes that if the action of Cleisthenes was the action of the State, it was valid: the only doubt touches the point, whether it *was* the action of the State, or merely that of a faction. Had the Athenian State lost its *identity* and disappeared, and was its place taken by a mere party? No doubt Cleisthenes' opponents would in this particular case have answered in the affirmative. But Aristotle will only be satisfied by a discussion of the general question—What constitutes the identity of the State? In virtue of what feature can a State be pronounced the same to-day as it was a year ago, whatever other feature may have altered?

THE SCHEME OF COMPOSITION

§ 2. We have seen the State defined as a compound of parts, a union of citizens participating in judicial and deliberative office. In what ways are these parts united together? Which of the ways in which they are united is essential to the identity of the compound? Here again, as in the determination of the nature of the citizen, or the discovery of the end of the State, Aristotle proceeds aporetically, and analysing the unity of the State into its several elements considers each in turn. One element in the union of the citizens who form a State is space; another is race. But it is not continued residence within the same walls which constitutes the identity of a State: indeed, there may be residence within the same walls, and yet no city at all. The Peloponnese might be surrounded by a single wall: Babylon actually was; but neither of them could ever be a State in the Greek sense. They were both far too large for that primary government which was essential to the city-state. Nor again, is permanence of race necessary to the State's identity. The same stock may continue to reside within the same walls, and yet the State may not be the same State. For it is really a third¹ factor altogether, the permanence of which means the permanence of the State. The nature of this factor at once appears, if we consider other things, which like the State are compounds

¹ Aristotle omits to consider other factors which may constitute the unity of the State—e.g. unity of religion, as in a Theocracy. But such a factor would hardly occur to a Greek.

It will not be treason to do so: he may very possibly have no other alternative, if he wishes to live in the State of his birth. For the revolution will probably have sent him into exile in some other State, oligarchically governed, and as such more nearly akin to his own true State than the new State which has arisen within its walls. He will consequently aid that other State in any war against the new State, whose usurpation has sent him into exile. It might even be said—paradoxically, it is true—that the real treachery of the member of an oligarchy would be loyally to accept the government of a democracy. This is the political morality of Greece, as it was the political morality of Florence and the other city-states of mediæval Italy.

This identification of the State with the constitution is one which naturally follows upon Aristotle's views of the meaning of citizenship. If the State consists of citizens, and citizens only, and if every citizen is an office-holder, then the constitution, which determines the holding of office, must determine the State. For it determines the character of the citizen body, which is the State; it makes that body democratically large, or oligarchically small; and within the body (of whatsoever size it may be) it determines the position which each member is to take. The nature of the constitution must therefore be the vital thing to men whose leisure has set them free for a life entirely devoted to politics, and whose position in that life, higher or lower, is determined by the constitution. Around the constitution a battle must rage—a battle for life or death. According as the constitution is decided, so is it decided for each man whether or no he shall share in the political life which is the one life he cares to live, or at the very least, whether he shall share fully and deeply, or unsatisfactorily and incompletely. The party life of modern times has far less zest than struggles such as these. Our parties are divided by principles, half real, half imaginary, in which some of us are interested, and many of us are not. The struggle between the two is to decide whether the leaders of one party or the other—in either case an infinitesimally small proportion of the whole party—shall have the offices through which those principles may be realised. The division of parties does not coincide with any division of classes. All classes are gathered

Nature of constitution a vital thing

scheme of composition of the units of a State goes far beyond determining their hierarchy. That scheme determines, or perhaps more correctly it is, the end in the pursuit of which the units are bound together as a composite whole. Similarly, it may be suggested, the scheme of composition of a piece of music is not the mere arrangement of notes, but the motive of the whole composition. The constitution may therefore be more fully defined as an arrangement of the offices of a State, determining their distribution, the residence of sovereignty, *and the end of political association* (1289 a 15). That end is really the primary concern of the constitution: it is the end, or the degree of contribution to that end, which determines the distribution of office. A constitution is essentially a determination or conception of the end at which a political community aims. It is the expression of the kind of life which that community sets before itself as its ideal; and it is accordingly described as the manner of life of a State (1295 a 40). Different constitutions involve different manners of life: "pursuing their ideals in different ways, and by different means, States arrive at different manners of life and different constitutions" (1328 a 41). Every constitution involves a corresponding type of character in its citizens. In a democracy, said Plato, the slaves are less obedient, and the very dogs less in hand. Pericles more kindly told the Athenians that as their political life was informed by the spirit of liberty, so their social life was distinguished by a freedom which suspicion or scandal never attacked. The later books of the *Republic* sketch the different types of character which correspond to different constitutions, describing, for instance, as we have seen, how democracy issues in a type of man to whom all desires are of *equal* strength, and who turns his hand equally to all manner of occupations. Aristotle tells us that an oligarchy, which makes wealth the qualification for office, and in this way enables the most sacred of trusts to be bought as it were with money, tends to encourage a materialistic and money-loving spirit in the whole State (1273 a 38 sq.). This conception is one not peculiar to the philosophers, but common among all Greeks. Greek States were, as a matter of fact, divided from one another by broad differences of character; the Stoical Spartan, the versatile Athenian, the "piggish" Boeotian, the

The constitution as determining the end of State

From this consideration of the meaning of the term constitution we have gained our final definition of the State, and much besides that will be of service in the classification of States. The State may now be defined as a compound of citizens sharing in judicial and deliberative office, and united by a constitution which both determines their places in the compound and supplies the motive of all their action. Before, however, we proceed to the classification of States, one more consideration remains; and that concerns the relation of the constitution to the Government. We have seen that the identity of a State resides in its constitution: we have yet to see that the constitution is identical with the Government.¹ This is twice affirmed by Aristotle in the third book of the *Politics*. A constitution is an arrangement of offices, and especially of the supreme office, or government; and the government, whether it be that of the few or the many, is the constitution. In other words, the constitution being *par excellence* a determination of the residence of the supreme authority, one may say, *convertendo*, that the residence of the supreme authority determines the nature of the constitution. In a democracy the people is the supreme authority or government: in an oligarchy the rich form the government. The supreme authorities are different; and *therefore* we regard the constitutions as different—which shows that we believe the constitution to vary with the government.

THE CLASSIFICATION OF STATES

§ 3. We may now proceed to the classification of States according to their different constitutions or governments. Two standards suggest themselves as a result of what has been said. The constitution being a determination of the end of a political community, and the end or final cause being the essence of definition and classification, we shall naturally classify States by the end at which they aim. Again, the constitution being a determination of the government, with which indeed it is identical, we shall also classify States by the differences which appear in the spirit of their governments. These are the two standards which Aristotle uses, and by the use of which he arrives at a classification almost exactly similar to that of Plato

¹ *πόλις* = *πολιτεία* = *πολίτευμα*: State = constitution = government.

something at which every true State aims, though it certainly fails to aim at everything at which a true State ought to aim. And hence it is never wholly rejected by Aristotle: on the contrary, he suggests means by which it may be improved and preserved; and he contemplates, as almost an ideal constitution, something which is really a mixture of two perversions.

The same distinction between normal and perverted States may also be drawn, if we consider the different tempers in which governments may act; but from this point of view the distinction is more profound, and reconciliation is less possible. States naturally fall into two kinds, according as governments act for their own interests, or for those of the community. In every normal State the government must necessarily be directed to the common welfare. It is of the very nature of the State as an association of equals that this should be so. And the analogy of the arts, which Plato (true to Socrates' views of the art of government) had already employed in the *Republic*, equally proves that governors should govern in the interest of the subjects of their government. Every doctor, and every trainer, makes the bodily health of his patient the aim and object of his skill; nor should it be otherwise with the ruler. His wisdom should also be directed to the welfare of his subjects, though there is this difference between him and the trainer, that as a member of the community, he must always consider his own welfare, along with that of the rest, while the trainer will only very occasionally merge himself with his class, and regard his own health. Ideally, therefore, those who practise the art of government must needs be unselfish, and the normal State must necessarily be one which is unselfishly governed; nor can that State be other than perverted, in which this is not the case. Whether this new standard coincides in its results with the previous standard of end, Aristotle does not inquire. But it is possible to imagine a State which is perverted in its end, and yet normal and correct in the sense that its government works disinterestedly for the whole community. A government given over to the mercantile system, and pursuing wealth as the end of the State, may yet be acting with entire unselfishness. Aristotle seems to assume that there will never be such a cross-division; that where wealth is pursued, there selfishness reigns;

—the “normal” kind in which the government is unselfish, because it pursues a moral purpose, and the “perversion,” in which the government is corrupt, because it fails to pursue such an aim. These two divisions differ with a difference of kind: they differ with a difference so great, that the first group of constitutions may be described as prior, and the second as posterior. Two main types of constitutions and their subdivision As the whole is prior to its parts, because the understanding of the parts presupposes the whole, so is the normal prior to the abnormal, because the understanding of the abnormal presupposes the normal as a standard. Within each of these two divisions—the normal and prior, the abnormal and posterior—Aristotle next proceeds to make a triple subdivision. The constitution, we have seen, is identical with the government; and in subdividing the two great types of constitutions, Aristotle naturally starts from the government. In all constitutions of the normal type, the governments agree in unselfishness: in what respect then do they differ, and where can we find a ground of subdivision? The principle of number naturally offers itself: the governments differ in the number of their members, and according as the one, the few, or the many compose the ruling body. The normal type of constitutions thus contains within itself three species—Monarchy, Aristocracy, and Polity. Monarchy and aristocracy explain themselves: the term Polity (*πολιτεία* or constitution) is the generic term applied particularly to one species, because that species has no name of its own. Polity accordingly means that subdivision of the normal type of constitution which is characterised by the rule of the many: it is the rule of the many for the common good: it is democracy turned unselfish, and translated, in consequence, to a higher sphere. The same subdivision according to number also applies to the abnormal and perverted type of constitution. That type equally contains within itself three species, according as the selfish government consists of one, or few, or many members. These three species are tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy. The first aims at the selfish interest of a single individual; the second at that of the wealthier classes; the third at that of the poor.¹

¹ Democracy, it would thus appear, does not mean for Aristotle the government of the people by the people for the people: it means the government of a people by the poor and for the poor. Cf. *infra*, pp. 460-61.

birth ; and hence, we are told, spring oligarchy, aristocracy and democracy. But it is obvious, that as is the principle of award, so is the ruling class to which office is awarded ; and if the principle be wealth, the ruling class will be the wealthy, while, if it be free birth, the ruling class will be the poor who form the majority of the free-born. We therefore attain the same classification ; but we have pushed our standard a remove further back, and classified rather by the principle which distributes, than by the class which receives, the offices of the State. We have borrowed in fact the principle of distributive justice as the standard of classification. By the use of this principle of distributive justice we are able, not only to classify constitutions, but also to classify them in order of merit. Two main kinds have, indeed, already been differentiated, of which one is the higher, and the other the lower ; but we can go further. We can discover which is the highest of the high, and the lowest of the low, in virtue of the different principles which different forms exhibit. In this way we discover monarchy to be the first of constitutions, because its principle of distribution is not merely virtue (*that* is the principle of all good constitutions), but the supreme virtue which can only be found in one solitary individual. Aristocracy follows next, taking as it does a high type of virtue for its principle ; and polity comes last, with its more mediocre and simply military virtue—for the virtue to which many men can attain will never be the whole of virtue, or even a fine side of virtue, but at best the virtue which is shown in the steadfast courage of a civic militia under arms. Turning to perverted constitutions, we find tyranny set lowest of the low, in the maxim "*corruptio optimi pessima*" ; for tyranny is a corruption of monarchy, and monarchy is the best of constitutions. Oligarchy, as it is the corruption of the second best, is also the second worst ; while democracy, the corruption of the least good, must needs also be the least bad. The same conclusion appears, if we regard these constitutions in a less negative light, and as exhibiting positive principles of their own. The principle of oligarchy is wealth : the principle of democracy free birth. As free birth is a wider and better principle than wealth, and wealth in its turn is wider and higher than mere force and fraud (which alone constitute the tyrant's claim to authority), so must demo-

that we must assume a number of constitutions. This in itself is an argument against the view (which seems to have been current in Aristotle's time), that there were two main constitutions, one in which the upper classes predominated, and one in which the poor were supreme—a view which made oligarchy and democracy the only two constitutions, subsuming aristocracy under the former, and the "polity" under the latter.¹ But not only does such a view neglect the number of constitutions which actual life presents: considered as a division of constitutions into two great types, and as that only, it seems to Aristotle superficial, and inferior to the distinction of normal and perverted States which he himself had made. For when oligarchy is made wide enough to include aristocracy, and democracy to include polity, this is only done by making mere number the determinant (and number was a principle which was rejected before), and by neglecting those fundamental qualitative differences between polity and democracy, oligarchy and aristocracy, which appear in the end they pursue, and the spirit of their pursuit.

An alternative treatment of this same question still survives in the *Politics*, side by side with the treatment which has just been sketched. Constitutions vary, we are again told, according to the predominance of different parts, or of different combinations of parts; but a new account of the parts is given, which differs considerably from the previous account. Instead of emphasising the different *social* groups, as distinguished by different *social characteristics*, Aristotle now considers the different *political* parts of the State, as distinguished by different *political functions*. Instead of two main groups, each with its subdivisions, there emerge some nine parts of the State: the farmer, the craftsman, the tradesman, the day-labourer (the three first of which before formed subdivisions of the poorer classes); the soldier, the judge, the man of means, who contributes with his wealth to the working of the State, and the members of the executive and the deliberative organs. There

¹ Kingship and tyranny are here disregarded, partly because Aristotle had himself discussed them before, partly perhaps because the supporters of the view here enunciated left them out of account, as not entering into the practical politics of their day.

Classification
according to
distribution of
functions

seems to be here a certain confusion of the organs of government with the classes of society; and when this classification apparently comes to be used (c. xiv.), it is only the difference of the organs of government which is regarded as creating differences of constitution. Starting from the principle that there are three parts of the State to be regarded, the judicial, the deliberative, and the executive organs (in the latter of which the military is perhaps included), Aristotle lays it down that constitutions vary according as these organs vary in their structure and relation. But this obviously introduces a new principle: instead of asking what class governs, irrespective of the structure and allocation of the functions of government, Aristotle now concentrates his attention upon these functions. The functions of government are not, however, discussed without regard to the different classes of the State: on the contrary, their allocation inevitably raises the question of the classes to which they are to be assigned. None the less, new considerations do emerge: the functions differ (and with them the constitutions) not merely in their allocation to different classes, but also in themselves, according as they cover more or less ground, and are more or less subdivided. Different deliberative organs may have very different provinces; while the executive may be either united or subdivided. But it is the deliberative which is the key: it is the sovereign determinant of the constitution, as its powers of auditing and electing the magistrates are the highest powers in the State. Accordingly it is the extent of the powers of the deliberative, the allocation of those powers, their concentration in one body or dispersion in several, which, from the new point of view here raised by Aristotle, must form the criterion of every constitution. No new classification upon this basis is attempted; and we are not told whether any modification of the old classification by social class would be introduced if it were. It would obviously have supplied a new line of division, which might have cut across the old line: for instance, a democracy like Athens, where the province of the deliberative was large, and the executive was weak, would have had to be contrasted with any type of democracy similar to that of modern Switzerland, which left power to its executive, and limited the scope of the deliberative. Just in the same way England and

generally representative institutions ; and we have to distinguish States in which the representative body controls the government, and the executive is responsible, from States in which this is not the case. Another and perhaps equally serious factor is the amount of unreality and convention which exists in the modern State. The English convention assigns all authority to the Crown : it used to be said that facts assigned real authority to Parliament. But it seems to-day ¹ that even this is a convention, and that the real authority resides with the Cabinet. And yet behind the Cabinet there is the electorate. But by which shall we classify—Crown, Parliament, Cabinet, or electorate ? Here there is such simple issue as confronted Aristotle ; and the answer is not easy. It has just been suggested, that the electorate is the determinant of the constitution. But what if the electorate only chooses within a charmed oligarchical circle, as in England it seems (or till of late seemed) to do ? Is the government democratical, because the electorate is large, or is it oligarchical, because the eligible are few ? One is almost driven to say that there is no absolute standard of classification ; and that England can only be classified according to several standards as a State with a large measure of local government, and with a central government conventionally composed of King and Parliament, but really of an oligarchical Cabinet constituted by a democratic electorate ; while, from still another point of view, this constitution must be regarded as unwritten and flexible, in contrast with written and rigid constitutions. But then, England is not really England : she is part of a State called the United Kingdom, which as contrasted with federal governments we must call a unitary State. And yet again the United Kingdom is a member of a system often called an Empire, which is neither a federation nor a unitary State. There are thus, it would appear, far too many factors to be reduced to any one scheme. But it is this very complexity which, while it makes Aristotle's classification inapplicable, also makes it valuable. The simplicity of his material made a scientific attempt at classification possible ; and that attempt must always remain an example and a model, though not an authority.

It remains to ask how far Aristotle was indebted to Plato

¹ This was written in 1905.

CHAPTER VIII

[*Ethics*, V.: *Politics*, II., viii.; III., ix.-xviii.]

ARISTOTLE'S CONCEPTIONS OF LAW AND JUSTICE

THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF LAW

§ 1. **T**HE laws of Alfred contain, in addition to their legal and secular matter, a number of religious enactments and the whole of the Decalogue. Law is here attempting to be universal: it would fain embrace every species of control or inhibition, to which instinctive impulse should subordinate itself. To Aristotle law is equally catholic: it is equally the sum of all the spiritual limits, under which man's action must proceed. The great spiritual limitation upon man, as we have already seen, is reason. It is the duty of man to bring his passions under the control and the limitation of reason. Law, as the sum of all spiritual limits, is therefore identified with reason: it is defined as "dispassionate reason". In man reason is close neighbour of many passions and can hardly be heard for their clamour: in law it emerges pure, a clear and solitary voice, which calls aloud through a silence in which all passion is hushed. But morality consists in a life according to reason: the words of reason are the moral code. The law, which is one with reason, must therefore also be one with the moral code.¹ The law enjoins courage, and continence, and consideration: it speaks about every virtue and vice, commanding and forbidding.² Its rules are laid down by political science, as the standard of what men should do, and what they should forbear to do.³ As the moral code of a community, law sets forth the end, the Final Good, which that community pursues.

Law catholic
and positive

Spiritual
limits
of man
reason

¹ Law=reason; reason=the moral obligation: ergo law=the moral obligation.

² *Ethics*, 1129 b 14-25.

³ *Ibid.*, 1094 b 5-60.

for confirmation. But the general Greek conception was that of the sole legislator, the Solon or Lycurgus who was responsible for the laws of his State. The ordinary amendment of law might proceed from the people: its original creation was assigned to some almost superhuman wisdom, which shaped the law in one great operation. The conception is unhistorical: it was none the less universal; and it appears in both Plato and Aristotle, who indeed themselves pose as nothing else than "legislators" in constructing their ideal States. To Aristotle the legislator is greater than the statesman, because he lays down the great lines on which the State is to move, while the statesman is an administrator of detail. He is responsible, we learn, alike for written and unwritten laws; for he may initiate customs, which are never set down in writing. To these latter Aristotle assigns a very large province. Valuable as are written laws, laws resting on unwritten customs are still higher than they, and concerned with higher things.¹ And further, above and beyond written law and unwritten custom, the legislator must also produce a right habit and spirit in those who are going to live according to both:

Quid leges sine moribus
Vanae proficiunt?

"There is no profit of the best laws, passed with the consent of every member of the community, if those members be not habituated and educated therein."² To lay down the principles of an education, which will make obedience to the laws come naturally to every citizen, is the prime work of the legislator. Greater than the writing of excellent laws on paper, is the writing of them into the spiritual fibre of a people: law-abidingness is more than law. Law, after all, is the expressed will of a community;³ for the essence of law is the will of the citizen to abide by the law.

Over the lesson here implied it is worth while to linger. One of the great lessons which Aristotle, like Plato, teaches, is that institutions and laws, taken concretely and in themselves, Law as a
spiritual force

¹ *Pol.*, 1287 b 5. ² *Ibid.*, 1310 a 14.

³ But while a modern thinker would regard law as originally created by the will of a community, Aristotle regards it as originally created by a legislator, who then makes it the will of the community, by training its members to will the law.

are mere stocks and stones; and that everything depends on the far deeper question, whether they live and are rooted in the mind of the members of the community in which they exist. Their true reality is not objective, but subjective. A law exists so far as it is a spiritual motive, apprehended and acted upon by a mind. The formal language is a mere external and visible sign of this inward and invisible spirit; and if this spirit does not exist, the law ceases to exist. What is true of law is true of all institutions, and of the whole of government. No utterly external force, no stimulus that is not met by an answering reaction, can permanently exist. Government is powerful not in the stimulus which it gives, but in the answering reaction which it finds. Government exists and has its power in the minds of its subjects. The remembrance of this truth is the beginning of political wisdom. It teaches that the way of political progress is the education of a people in new ideas, and not the creation of new institutions to which there are no answering ideas, and which are therefore nothing. It teaches that any change of laws or institutions must be slow, because the ideas in which they are rooted can only be eradicated with difficulty; and must be along the lines of the past, for a people will never come by a wholly new set of ideas. It is in the strength of his hold on the subjective side of law and of institutions, that Aristotle reaches some of his greatest conclusions. He can answer Plato's communism with the rejoinder, that it is a cleansing of the heart, and not of garments, that the world requires.¹ Communistic institutions will not create unselfishness; but a mind trained to unselfishness by education will treat even private property in a spirit of communism. He can tell all founders of States, that the one guarantee for the preservation of the government which they institute is a training of the people in its likeness: he can even insist, that the spirit of the constitution, living in a people, not only preserves the constitution, but gave it originally whatever vitality it has.² He knows well enough that government must be based on consent, that "more must be the number of those

¹ The criticism of Plato is unfair: the point urged in the criticism is very true.

² *Pol.*, 1337 a 15.

who wish a State to continue, than of those who do not"; but he also knows that the consent is no mere passive acceptance, but a spiritual habit in conformity with the State "creating and preserving" its institutions. He knows that the primary work of every "legislator" who aims at political progress is to educate a people into the ways of thought and action, which make possible and will alone make permanent his legislation. This is why education bulks largely in Aristotle, and why, in the fragment on the ideal State, a sketch of the education of its citizens is his first, and indeed his only, concern. Finally, as he had answered Plato in the strength of his feeling for the subjective basis of laws and institutions, so, in the same strength, he answered Hippodamus. Hippodamus had proposed rewards for those who found out inventions which were for the advantage of the State. It is specious, says Aristotle;¹ but a premium upon inventions of new things is an incitement to political instability. And the suggestion raises, he adds, another question: is it good to change traditional laws, if newer and better laws be discovered? It may be argued in favour of change, that political science is an art, and should, like other arts, alter and improve its product—which is law—as knowledge alters and advances. Primitive man was a rude and witless being, and his laws were simple and uncouth things, which are not worth cherishing; nor, in any case, is it the aim of men to be true to tradition, but rather to pursue the ideal. This is an argument which applies particularly to unwritten tradition; but even written laws of a more modern type have their defects. They are couched in general terms: the actions which they seek to control are concerned with particulars; and an accumulation of greater experience may show that the one is not properly adjusted to the other. To these considerations Aristotle answers, that while some laws should sometimes be altered (and here he is probably thinking of primitive customs), yet on the whole change is to be mistrusted. It is an ill thing to fall into the spirit of change, even if it be the result of a series of changes for the better: the advantage of change will be less than the disadvantage of instability and disobedience to authority. In this Aristotle speaks as a Greek, dreading the Greek vice of

Stability of
Law

¹ *Politics*, ii., c. 8.

not constitutions at all. But while there must be law, to determine the channels of the action of the government, a difficult question at once arises, if we seek to determine the extent to which the law should control the government. On general principles, indeed, Aristotle comes rapidly to the conclusion that ~~the~~ true relation between law and government is secured by making the law sovereign and the government ~~its~~ servant. Whether power be given to the few or the many, it is argued, there is every probability that the government will tend of itself to selfishness. The few will oppress the many, or the many the few. To preserve unselfishness, law must be constituted sovereign, and the government left sovereign only over those particular details which law cannot touch because of its generality. But this consideration only touches oligarchy and democracy, and what applies to the few or the many will not necessarily apply to the one. If we suppose the existence in a State of a man ideally gifted in character and political capacity, of a "god among men," it cannot but appear ridiculous to impose laws on his actions, for his own wisdom is a still higher law. It would be absurd to consider him as a part of the State, when his supreme gifts make him as it were the whole, and when the rest of the civic body, less richly endowed, sinks by comparison into a mere part.¹ Two courses are open—either to banish him from a society of which he is too great to be a member, or to make him its absolute ruler. The former plan, which is that of ostracism, cannot be lightly dismissed as the mere "trick" of a tyranny or a democracy, intended to preserve a government which feels itself threatened: it is a practice known to good constitutions as well as to bad, and to barbarians as well as to Greeks. The excision of a too prominent feature from his work is necessary even to the artist, if he does not wish to spoil the unity of his composition. But ostracism can hardly be the right policy of a State, which makes virtue its aim, towards a member who is distinguished by a supreme degree of virtue. It would be too glaringly illogical. It remains therefore that the citizens

¹ That is to say, he possesses of himself everything which it is the aim of the State to secure, a perfect *αὐράκεια*; while the other members, even in their totality, are without him insufficient, and fall short of *αὐράκεια*.

But if reason is to rule every man, it must rule the ruler himself; and the ultimate sovereign of the State will be dispassionate reason. But dispassionate reason is nothing else than law; and it is therefore necessary, if a State is to be normal and directed by unselfish rulers towards the general good, that it should have law for its ultimate sovereign. If a single man is to rule at all, he must be a man who has tied his hands by law; though it may be conceded that his hands should be unbound for a free course of action, in cases where the law stands in need of correction, or has nothing to say. This conclusion would involve a monarchy of the Stuart pattern, as defined by James I., where the monarch is the source of a law to which he conforms, but where he also possesses a large prerogative which can override or act outside the law. And indeed the issue here suggested is not unlike the issue debated between the early Stuarts and their Parliaments. The Stuarts claimed a flexible authority, which could meet the vicissitudes of foreign policy promptly and effectively, and could desert the normal course of parliamentary taxation for prerogative levies where circumstances demanded. They spoke in the name of "efficiency," which is still, as it was to Plato, a name with which to conjure. On the other hand the popular party was afraid that a policy of extending monarchical authority lurked behind the veil. It demanded that regal action should "run in certain and known channels,"¹ or according to law; and it even argued, that if delay and inconvenience resulted from the necessity of observing forms and rules, it was "more tolerable to suffer an hurt . . . for a short time, than to give way to the breach and violation of the right".²

But the conclusion in favour of a monarch, acting by law of his own free will except where the law is silent or in need of correction, is not by any means final in Aristotle. He is inclined to doubt whether, when law fails to decide a question at all, or at any rate to decide it fully, one man is a better supplement of the law than are the many or the few. Much may be said in favour of the many: their collective wisdom and their incorruptibility are perhaps their greatest recommendations, when

¹ St. John in Hampden's case.

² Whitelocke in the debate on Impositions.

which the law has given, for law itself has educated them for their work, by informing them with its own lofty spirit. It is law itself which will correct or supplement the laws. Law is not set rigidly against all alteration: on the contrary, it always concedes and admits an alteration of itself in the light of a wider experience. Even without any formal amendment of the law, it is always possible to adapt the law to cases where it may seem inapplicable. Besides the law there is equity; or rather there is equity *in* the law. That is to say, when the letter of the written law may be harsh, it is always possible to apply its spirit, which can never be harsh. Equity is no other than justice, or conformity to the law; but while justice would interpret the law as it stands written, equity interprets it according to the intention of its creator.¹ The legislator has spoken in general terms, denouncing a penalty against some offence. That offence has been committed; but the guilt of its commission disappears before a number of modifying circumstances, which the legislator never contemplated, and which the law cannot therefore itself envisage. It is here that equity appears, and taking cognisance of these circumstances, pronounces as the legislator would have pronounced himself in a similar case. In a sense, equity is a correction of the law, where it fails on account of its generality: in another sense it is a fulfilling of the real law. In either sense it gives the law that flexibility in which it has been accused of failing: through equity, law is alive to the play of circumstance; through equity, it can meet each new stimulus with an answering reaction.

We thus come upon the conception of the State as an association, in which justice is done to the practical equality of its members by rotation of office. In this association law rules as the sovereign; but that law readily admits of the modifications, which a wider experience of facts combined with the teaching of its own spirit may suggest. The Platonic conception regards the State not as an association, but rather as a workshop, in which the rulers are so many craftsmen busy at work, shaping the rude material of human character into form. On the walls of that workshop there shall be hung no rules

¹ *Ethics*, 1137 a 31 *sqq.*

and ears to hear. The difficulty is not his possible selfishness: it is his probable ignorance. And if elective monarchy might secure a wise ruler, it might on the other hand fail in detachment, and in elevation above contentious issues. Yet, as we have seen, it has been advocated in modern times as the cure of political evils, "during the present State of transition" to a "new industrial society," and as the one hope for that neutrality and mediation, which Aristotle, or the party for which Aristotle is here speaking, expected to find in law.

We have not yet concluded the case of those who opposed monarchy in the name of law. We have yet to see that behind the defence of an impersonal law there lurked the defence of the more personal and more vital cause of popular government. Assuming that it is now proven (the advocates of law will tell us) that law is sovereign in the whole of the sphere which it can cover, it remains to determine the authority which shall control the residuary sphere of what may be called deliberation on particular issues. That authority, it is suggested at the end of this second discussion, must be the masses. Two pairs of eyes are better than one, and many pairs of eyes are better than two: deliberation belongs by right to the collective insight of a popular assembly. Does not even a monarch take unto himself the eyes and ears of his friends, and are not friends the equals of their friend? A monarchy, in which the monarch governs with and through his equals, is a virtual democracy; but why not begin with an acknowledged democracy? It would be easy to meet these considerations. One might urge that the "many-headed beast" is not so much a many-brained being, possessed of collective insight, as a many-passioned thing, liable to a collective brutality tempered by a collective fickleness, as had been argued by Plato, and as had been shown by the conduct of the Athenians to the revolted Mitylenæans, whom they first condemned to death, and then in a revulsion of feeling allowed to live. Nor is monarchy, which is a virtual democracy, the same as democracy: constitutional monarchy, which is somewhat after this pattern, has peculiarities and qualities of its own.

Here end, however, the two discussions, in which Aristotle, this way and that dividing his mind, discusses the pros and cons of absolute monarchy and the rule of law. The final

Law sovereign
but who shall
supplement
Law?

al verdict
Aristotle

verdict of Aristotle himself, when he comes, at the end of the third book, to sit in judgment on the controversy, is based upon a new and characteristically practical suggestion. There is no absolute and single principle. We cannot decide unreservedly, either for the monarchical or the democratical principle, either for man or for law. It is not a question of principles to be imposed on peoples: it is a question of the character of the people, and the principle which that character demands. Constitutions are based on the character of the people who live under their sway; and differences of constitutions depend on differences of character. Plato, as we have seen, connected constitutions with character, but Plato had meant a type of moral character: he had meant that the political licence of a democracy corresponded to a similar licence of private life. Aristotle is referring to the political genius of a people: he is distinguishing the character of a people of equals, cherishing equality and suited for democracy, from that of a people to whom reverence for authority and the instinct of loyalty to a superior is natural. He is anticipating Montesquieu; though Montesquieu goes still further, and bases character on climate. If then there be a people such that one of its members stands supreme,

οἷος πέπνυται, τοὶ δὲ σκίαὶ αἰσθουσιν,

such a people is meant for monarchy, and this one man for monarch. Justice demands that he should be king: the only alternative, that of ostracism, is illogical and impossible. But where the people is composed of members equal and similar to one another, it would be as inexpedient as it would be unjust for one man to rule them altogether, whether absolutely and as a law in himself, or constitutionally and under the limitation of the law. On the whole, therefore, since the conception of the State as an association involves the equality of its members, and since this is the conception which Aristotle holds, it may be said that his verdict is given against monarchy, and in favour of law and the rotation of office. The absolute king is an academic speculation *in nubibus*. It would be a mistake to imagine that Alexander is anywhere contemplated in the discussion of absolute monarchy. It is an old scholastic question, revived by Plato, which occupies Aristotle; it is not the epiphany of a hero-king, posing as in very deed a "god among men".

The problem of Alexander's position never occurs to Aristotle's mind. If he had attempted to define the authority which Alexander held over the Greek world he would have classed it, quite soberly, as belonging to that kind of monarchy which he calls a military command for life, and to the elective species of that kind. He would simply have thought of Alexander as having, like his father, been elected by the Congress of Corinth "plenipotentiary general of Greece".

JUSTICE

§ 2 In speaking of law, we were led to speak of a conception of justice, which was characterised as "complete" justice, and ^{(1.) Justice, as complete virtue} which meant the fulfilling of the law. As law was found to be one with moral obligation, so was justice found to be one with virtue, if not, indeed, higher than virtue. It was seen to be the quality of a member of a moral community, acting in accordance with the whole of the moral law, because that law was the law of the community. Such a conception of justice is essentially connected with the Greek view of the State as an ethical society. ~~To hold that view of the State was to be committed to this conception of justice; and Aristotle shares it accordingly both with Plato, who made justice the sum of the virtues, and with the proverbial philosophy which held that "to be just is to have all the virtues in one".~~ When the State ceases to be an ethical society, the identity of justice and virtue also ceases: the citizen of a perverted State may still be just, in so far as he obeys the law of that State, but while he is just, he is not virtuous, for the law which he obeys is an aberration. To be a good citizen of a moral State is to be just, and, in such a State, to be just is to be virtuous: to be a good citizen of a perverted State is also to be just, but to be just is not to be virtuous. From this point of view we again come to see (what has already appeared to us from another point of view) that the good citizen of an ideal State, but only the good citizen of an ideal State, is also a good man.

The conception of justice as "complete virtue" is foreign to modern thought, just because the Greek conception of the State is also foreign. Justice is to our eyes a particular virtue: it is one of the ornaments of virtue: we count

ay electorate, trusting dimly in the "common sense" of the people for good results. There are dangers in our confidence, as there were dangers in Aristotle's confidence. The people may cast its decision for the thing which is immediately pleasant, rather than for the ultimate advantage of the State: it may be ready to listen to the demagogue who persuades it to advance along the path to which it only too readily inclines of itself. It may decide in favour of its own interests, at the expense of the other elements of the State: it may indulge in wasteful expenditure on vast enterprises, because it is careful to put their burden on the shoulders of others. All these things it may do, and all these things in Greek democracies it had done, as Aristotle knew and tells us. And yet Aristotle could still trust the many: he was not like Plato driven by their failings to rely on the one hope of an ideal aristocracy. Aristocracy is indeed to him as to Plato always the ideal; but he can see the soul of goodness in everything, and he finds a soul of goodness in the people. Once more he is justifying the given and actual fact (for democracy, as he says, was a fact, and a necessary fact, in the populous States of his time) by conceiving the actual in its ideal meaning, and by lifting what is to the plane of what might be. It is in this trait that Aristotle reminds one of Burke: the two stand together as conservative reformers. It is a trait which he owes to his philosophic procedure. Instead of leaping beyond facts to an ideal, which they must reflect, and by which, if they do not faithfully reflect its perfection, they are rejected as false and erroneous, Aristotle patiently studies the facts, in order to arrive at their meaning and estimate their value. And here the "dynamic" quality of his philosophy enters, to help his patient respect for the real in dealing tenderly with all beings and all institutions. The idea of development is gracious in its influences. Things must be judged not only as what they are, but as what they may come to be. Their meaning and value cannot be appreciated apart from their possibilities.

In pursuing the study of distributive justice we have started from a presumption in favour of aristocracy, tempered by a preference for monarchy in those rare States where one of Nature's monarchs is born, and we have ended in a vindication of a

while elsewhere it was understood as subjection to an authority working for the interests of the subject, and agreeable to his wishes, if not constituted by his will. (ii.) On what may be called its legal side liberty had equally different senses. In a democracy, "to be free was to live as one liked" (1317 b 12). Liberty had the negative sense of freedom from interference. The democrat argued—"Liberty is, what slavery is not: slavery means *not* to live as one likes; ergo, liberty means to live as one likes". Liberty in this sense of laxity or licence was regarded by Plato as the curse of democracy; to Pericles, on the contrary, it was one of its blessings. Aristotle agrees with Plato in censuring this democratic conception: to live as one likes, and for what one desires, is a bad definition of liberty (1310 a 34). And one would gather, though he does not in so many words say, that liberty, on its legal side, is "obedience to rightly constituted laws". While, therefore, like many modern thinkers, the Greek democrats found liberty in a somewhat incongruous mixture of the government of the majority and the release of the individual from governmental restriction, the true classical theory, as represented by Aristotle, viewed it as subjection to unselfish and constitutional authority and obedience to right and proper law. Hobbes' strictures on Aristotle, as one of the fathers of false ideas of liberty, were altogether mistaken. Aristotle taught the same doctrine which Montesquieu afterwards taught, that "liberty is the right to do as one ought to do, and not to do what one ought not to do". "One ought not to believe that it is slavery to conform one's life to the constitution: one ought to believe that it is salvation" (1310 a 35). It is a doctrine from which the natural man revolts; he is instinctively of the school of the democrats, and wishes to find liberty in some assertion of his own will, rather than in conforming his will, as the other conception would seem to involve, to something outside himself. But if liberty is self-determination towards an approved object, and if authority and law represent approved objects, it follows that liberty consists in determining oneself by their commands.

In regard to equality the teaching of Aristotle is equally just. True equality does not consist, as democracy believes, in every man's counting for one and no more than one. Equality

Equality in
Aristotle

does not mean the levelling of distinctions, or the dragging of the wealthy from their pedestals : it means the preservation of distinctions. For equality is not numerical, but proportional: it is not the equality of unit to unit, but of ratio to ratio. Equality means, not that the recognition of the better man is equal to the recognition of the worse, but that the ratio between the recognition and merit in the one case is equal to the ratio in the other. Equality recognises the higher as higher : it preserves distinctions. And thus we may say, in a paradox, that liberty which is subjection, an equality which consists in inequality, are the guiding conceptions of Aristotle.

From this account of the moral unity of the State, as that moral unity is conceived by Aristotle, we may now turn to discuss the degree of material unity in economic life which that unity permits or postulates. We have seen that moral life requires its equipment and furniture of things material. We have seen that economics is one of the sciences subordinate to political science. We have now to sketch the "principles of economics" to which these conceptions lead.

CHAPTER IX

[*Politics* I., c. ii.-xiii. ; II., c. i.-vii. : *Ethics*, V. v.]

ARISTOTLE'S PRINCIPLES OF ECONOMICS

THE SPHERE OF ECONOMICS

§ 1. **T**HE subject of the first book of the *Politics* is defined by Aristotle himself as household management (*οἰκονομία*) and the method of dealing with slaves (*δεσποτεία*); ^{Meaning of *οἰκονομική*} and it is contrasted with the rest of the *Politics*, whose subject is the State and questions of politics. In dealing with the household before the State, Aristotle is following Nature: he is taking first that which comes first, and dealing with the part before he describes the whole. The end of the household is something necessary, but subsidiary, to the supreme end pursued by the State; it is equally necessary (if also a subsidiary matter) to begin a book on politics by an account of the methods and purpose of economics. But in postulating the necessity of a discussion on economics, we must be careful to define the term we use. In the first place, economics means the art of managing the affairs of a household, as politics the art of managing the affairs of a State. "Political economy" would therefore be, to a Greek, a contradiction in terms. One of the aims of Aristotle in the first book of the *Politics* is to distinguish carefully economics and politics, domestic management and political government; they had been, in his view, improperly confused by Plato in the *Politicus*. The sphere of economics is for Aristotle the family: for us it is the State. A second difference appears, when we reflect that the art of managing a household implies much more than we understand by the word "economy". It implies a faculty of dealing not only with the material necessities of life, but also with the

It may be convenient to divide economics (including acquisition, which if not an integral part is nevertheless a part of the subject for the purposes of theoretical discussion) into some three main divisions. One of these will be concerned with slavery; a second will be occupied by the theory of property, and its proper production, exchange, and distribution; a third will regard the family. Strictly speaking, indeed, there is but one subject—the family, of which slaves are a part, and property is an adjunct; but the division here suggested is one which seems to represent the actual process of Aristotle's argument.

THE THEORY OF SLAVERY

§ 2. The Aristotelian theory of slavery possesses a peculiar interest. It is a reasoned defence for an institution, which the civilised world has now long conspired to reject; it is an attempt to justify what has often been called the blot on Greek civilisation; it is an effort to show that what was necessary for the full flower of Greek life was not only necessary as a condition, but also just in itself. In defending the natural character of slavery, Aristotle starts from the same sophistic view, and uses the same arguments to controvert that view, as in defending the State. Slavery was conventional, the sophists had maintained: on the contrary, he answers, it is natural, and natural because it is moral.

Aristotle
defends the
natural origin
of slavery

The doctrine of the natural equality of man lay at the basis of the sophistic attack on slavery. Many of the sophists, it is true, argued for the natural *inequality* of man, and defended the right of the strong to use their strength. But sophistic doctrine was a Protean thing; and there were apparently others who held that slavery was a thing of pure convention, and that, as a later rhetorician said, "God had left all men free, and Nature had made man a slave". The institution of slavery had, however, been shaken less by theoretical attacks than by the logic of events. When the great disaster at Syracuse involved hundreds of Athenians in slavery; when again the overthrow of Sparta by the Thebans led to the liberation of the long-enslaved Messenians, these things could not but produce a feeling that the slavery which could suddenly engulf an Athenian, and from which the Helot could as suddenly emerge after three centuries of bondage, was a fortuitous, accidental thing, based

citizen ; " in their owner's household they were treated as members of the family ".¹ Legally as well as socially, they were not degraded : they were protected from ill-usage by the State ; and they could not be punished with death except by its tribunals. There were slaves who lived by themselves and only paid their masters an annual rent ; and it seems like a *métayer* system applied to industry instead of land, when we find gangs of slaves working under slave overseers in a factory, and dividing among themselves the profits which remained when their master had been paid his annual rent. The Athenian policeman was a slave ; and slaves also filled the lower posts in the civil service. Emancipation was not difficult ; the slave might even purchase his own freedom. With this state of affairs, one can readily understand why Athenian slaves are described as impudent and shameless, and why Plato regards it as characteristic of democracy, that its slaves share the prevalent laxity. One feels, too, the difference between this domestic slavery, in which the slave is not separated by a gulf from his master, and the slavery of the modern plantation, with its deep lines of demarcation, and its exploitation of the slave to the uttermost farthing.

What then is Aristotle's philosophy of this system ? He begins by asking—What is a slave ? (i.) Every art, he answers, requires its proper instrument (*δργانون*). The art of economics requires the instruments which are necessary for managing a household. The generic name for the instruments which it requires is property ; and " property is a collection of instruments ". Instruments may be either inanimate or animate. The art of piloting a ship, for instance, requires the two instruments of a rudder, which is inanimate, and a man on the look-out in the bows, who may be called the animate instrument of the pilot. Similarly the art of managing a household needs for its object (which may be for the present defined as the sustenance of life²) both inanimate instruments, like dress

¹ Gilbert, *Constitutional Antiquities*, Eng. Trans., p. 171. The author of the treatise *De Republica Atheniensium* remarks : " If it were permissible to strike an unknown slave, metic, or freedman, there would be great danger of assaulting a free citizen unawares "—so much were citizen and slave alike in dress (Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, ii., 16).

² But this definition is imperfect, since the household is concerned with virtue rather than with property, and with producing goodness rather than with fostering life.

theory which Aristotle holds of the relation of the citizen to the State: the citizen, similarly, has no life or meaning but that of citizen. In either case Aristotle departs from his original position; and as he contemplates the citizen as a man and not only a citizen, so too he ultimately regards the slave as not only a slave, but a man.

So far, the slave has been simply defined; though incidentally he has been proved to be so far natural that he is necessary as an instrument to the life of a household. But the definition of the slave naturally raises the serious problem: *Is there such a being as the idea of the slave demands for its realisation?*

Are there such natural lines of demarcation between man and man as is here implied? That there is such a being, and that there are such lines, both reason and facts seem to Aristotle to prove. Slavery is part of the teleological scheme of the universe. Reason proves that a principle of rule and subordination runs through the world. It is as true of inanimate as it is of animate Nature. Even in music there is a "dominant" tone. Wherever, in fact, there is a union of elements in a single compound—(whether these elements be musical notes or human beings)—there is a scheme co-ordinating those elements in the pursuit of a single end; and wherever there is a scheme, there must be a supremacy of one element, and a subordination of others. The union of master and slave forms a household, and the scheme of the household demands the subordination of the one and the rule of the other. Universal as is this principle of rule and subordination, reason shows that it is not uniform. There are different degrees of rule and subordination. If the thing ruled is good in its kind, the thing ruling will exercise a nobler kind of authority, and the two together will produce a finer result, than if it be poor. The rule of the master over the slave is one of these degrees; it is a rule nobler in kind than that of the shepherd over his flock, but less noble than that of the statesman over his citizens.¹ Nature supplies us with parallels.² The soul rules the body with the "despotic" rule of a master over his slaves; reason controls the desires with the "political"

Slavery justified by the analogy of Nature

¹ This is in opposition to the doctrine of the *Politicus*, and in proof of the contention that the political art, by which the rule of the statesman is directed, is a thing *sui generis*. ² Cf. *supra*, p. 26.

d that only, if strict logic be observed. If the slave is a mere dy, he must indeed have enough of soul to perceive objects d to move his body; but he cannot have more.¹ He cannot ve reason; or he will be more than a mere body, and something of a spirit. Now it seems somewhat strange that a man ould exist, in whom reason, which is the differentia of man, d the very essence of his individuality, should be entirely sent. Such a being will be a man who has none of the marks a man: he will be an animal in human form. Nor does istotle ever really suppose that he exists. He always regards e slave as being possessed of the *semi-rational* part of the soul, d as so far enjoying reason that he can listen to its voice. e slave is therefore a creature possessed of desire—of will, d spirit, and appetite. He is a being in a state of perpet- l youth (since youth is the age of desire), and therefore of rpetual tutelage. But tutelage is not slavery. The rule of ason over desire is only the *political* rule of a statesman er his fellows: it is the rule exercised by the rulers of the eal State over the young whose appetites they are training. avery is *not* justified by the fact that the slave has only a nor reason: that will only justify a certain guardianship. or can this guardianship be really perpetual. For it is as im- ssible to imagine a class of beings who always *must be* per- tual children, as it is to imagine a class of beings who are imals in human form (though there may be isolated speci- ns of both, and particularly of the former). That reason ould be present even in an imperfect form means a potential- of reason in its fulness. And that the slave can attain reason its fulness, and with reason the freedom of self-control, is nitted by Aristotle. He provides for the emancipation of ves: in speaking of the ideal State, he lays it down as an om, that *all* slaves should have the prize of an ultimate edom set before their eyes—though he does not explain, as promises to do, why this should be so.² But if the slave n one day come by his freedom, it follows that he was always pable of attaining that ultimate freedom, and that he should vays have been treated as a man, in whom the potentialities

¹ It is argued in the *De Anima*, 1413 b 24, that perception involves ap- ite; but nothing is said of spirit or will. ² *Politics*, 1330 a 33.

be vitiated by the facts that the slave is a *man*; that, as a man, he is possessed of reason; that, as possessed of reason, he is capable of self-direction; and that, as capable of self-direction, he requires freedom for its condition. These are the reasons which must always condemn slavery. No man can properly be a slave, just because he is a man, a person possessed of a rational will. "Prevent him (if it were possible) from using his body to express a will, and the will itself could not become a reality: he would not really be a person." The primary basis of liberty is thus *personality*—as personality is the basis of all rights. At the same time mere personality (or the person viewed as an isolated individuality) does not of itself involve the right to liberty; nor does the mere capacity for expressing a will demand freedom for its realisation. Only a social personality and a social will can claim freedom.¹ Freedom demands "capacity on the part of the subject for membership of a society, for determination of the will, and through it of the bodily organisation, by the conception of a well-being as common to self with others".² For freedom, like all rights, has a double aspect: on one side it is individual, as rooted in a person; on the other side it is social, as meaning the recognition of that person by a society. And that recognition will not be given except to a person who recognises on his side the same aims and purposes as the society in which he lives. If a slave were an enemy to the aims and purposes of society, he would have no right to liberty.³ But Aristotle himself admits that he is not an enemy: he speaks of him as "able to share in law and covenant," just as he admits (by allowing emancipation) that he is capable of self-direction by his own will. And in making these admissions he really states the case for freedom, and destroys the basis of slavery.

So far, we have attempted to show that Aristotle's theory of a natural slave and natural slavery is, as all false theories tend to be, refuted by its own author in the course of its statement. For a false theory must always fall into inconsistency,

¹ A rational will must however always be social; and a rational will was postulated above for the slave.

² Green, *Principles of Political Obligation*, p. 156.

³ Society imprisons such enemies.

orce there must always be virtue as well, to conciliate
 dwill of the vanquished, and to justify their slavery by a
 consent. The latter school interpreted the same principle
 ning that force of itself always involved virtue for its
 y, and of itself justified slavery. Either school really
 s adhesion, it seemed to Aristotle, to his own view, that
 natural superiority in character was a proper foundation
 ery. Some there were indeed who, contenting themselves
 e mere letter of the law, held that every man who was
 a slave was rightly a slave. But inasmuch as they also
 ed that no Greek could ever be rightly a slave, they con-
 d their own position, and testified once more to the view
 ly those whom Nature has meant for slaves can rightly
 ed as slaves. They admitted in fact that not law, but
 , determined freeman and slave; and that the differences
 d endowment which Nature had given were the ultimate
 of liberty and subjection. And in admitting this they
 as Aristotle intended his doctrine to limit, the scope of

If only the natural master, endowed with moral
 y, had a right to his position, and the merely legal
 or the master who rested merely on force, were dis-
 d: if, again, only the natural slave, whom Nature had
 rally imperfect, could properly be a slave, and the Greek
 empt from slavery—then, it is easy to see, the number
 ters and slaves would be seriously diminished; and the
 e of “natural slaves,” far from condoning, would seem
 lenge existing slavery.¹

From the postulate of moral superiority in the master,
 oral inferiority in the slave, it follows that slavery is a
 nstitution. The slave is supplemented, and becomes a
 eing through being supplemented, by the moral faculty
 naster. The slave attains through his slavery not only
 tue of being a good servant, but also, to the extent of
 he is capable, the virtue of being a good man. The
 is a little thing in comparison; and it comes to the
 not necessarily from his master, but (it may be) from
 rseer. The latter is everything. The essence of the

Aristotle only
 defends
 slavery when
 it is morally
 justifiable

stotle's doctrine may seem to us to defend slavery: it is quite pos-
 t it struck his contemporaries as also an attack.

from a vote, as Aristotle would have excluded him from the assembly. One thing it does not do. While recognising the right of every man to life and liberty, it does not make it real. There is a positive implication in the recognition of a right to liberty. We give freedom to all, because all *can* help to realise the common aim of society by discharging some function which contributes to its realisation. But we do not attempt to see to it that each man *shall* have the function, the work, which is the positive side of his freedom. "While we say that he shall not be used as a means, we often leave him without the chance of using himself for any social end at all."¹ One of the saddest things in our modern life is the man who has no place, and who has yet full capacity and every desire to fill a place. The sadness is deeper than starvation: it is the sadness of loneliness in a crowded world. Nor can we boast that we have risen superior to slavery, unless we make our freedom no bare liberty to live somehow, but a concrete liberty to do a definite work, and to take a definite place in the world.²

ARISTOTLE'S THEORY OF WEALTH AND ITS PRODUCTION

§ 3. We now turn to the "economics" of Aristotle in the modern sense of the word—to his theory of wealth, and its production, exchange, and distribution. We saw that the slave was an "instrument" of the householder, and that the same was true of property—of dress and food and furniture. But the slave, we also saw, is a real part of the household, because he shares in its moral life; and the treatment of the slave is a real part of the art of the householder, because it involves the inculcation of virtue. With property it is obviously otherwise. Property, we have already learned, is external to the good life: it is a condition, but not a part. Accordingly the science of acquiring property (*κτητική*) is no part of "economics," in the strict sense of the word; though it must be treated under that head, as a necessary condition of the "economist's" activity.

Such being the place of the science of acquisition, we have now to inquire into the nature of wealth, and the means of its

Definition of
wealth

¹ Green, *Principles of Political Obligation*, p. 159.

² I do not mean this to imply *le droit de travail*, or that the State ought to employ its unemployed members in production on its own account.

infinite wealth will satisfy an infinity of need. Aristotle, thinking of the earth as yielding her abundance readily, and of men as only too prone to put out her gifts at usury, felt on the contrary that the moral purpose of life might be choked in riches, if riches exceeded the measure which the fulfilling of that purpose demanded.

Of the acquisition of wealth Aristotle has much to say; but the fundamental characteristic of his theory of production, if it may be so called, is a reactionary archaism, which abolishes Two methods of acquiring wealth all the economic machinery of civilisation in favour of the self-supporting farm and a modicum of barter. The acquisition of wealth, we are told, is the subject of the art of profit-making (*χρηματιστική*).¹ This art is related to "economics" (of which we have already seen that it is not really a part), as provider is related to user. It may provide in two ways; and there may consequently be said to be two divisions of the art of profit-making. It may make its profit *from the soil* (*ἀπὸ γῆς*); entrusting to the ground its seed-corn, it may reap from Nature, who pays liberal interest on what is lent to her, a hundredfold in return. Or again, the man who pursues this art may make his profit *from his fellows* (*ἀπ' ἀλλήλων*): selling commodities, he may sell at a large profit; lending moneys, he may lend at a heavy interest. Here the return is not given by Nature; it is wrung from man. The two methods may almost be called the vegetarian and the cannibal: the one enables man to live by the fruits of the earth; the other makes him a Shylock, living by the pounds of flesh which he exacts from customer or debtor. To the latter method in particular the term *chrematistic* may be applied; and thus the art of profit-making is often to be understood, as including only the practice of traffic and usury. But we must first discuss that branch of acquisition which is concerned with the making of profits from the soil, before we turn to its "perversion".

In his discussion of economics, the antithesis of "natural" and "conventional," on which he is not elsewhere inclined to lay Reactionary character of Aristotle's economics

¹ The generic science of the acquisition of wealth (*κτητική*) falls into two branches, according as it is exercised peaceably, and by agriculture or trade (*χρηματιστική*), or violently, and by slave-hunting or piracy (*θηρευτική*). *Chrematistic* seems, however, to be also used as the general term.

ary view is presented, by which the origin of money is principally referred to the necessity of a measure of value. The essence of exchange is proportionate requital; Callicles must return to Callias, in quantity and quality, what he has received.¹ The difficulty is, that exchange is necessarily of two *different* objects, the one of which has to be weighed against the other. If this is to be done, a *tertium quid* must be taken, which will serve as a common measure for these (and for all other) objects. Fundamentally, this *tertium quid* is demand; and objects are measured against one another in terms of the amount of demand which they excite. But demand being in itself intangible, money has been introduced as its representative by a general agreement.² In these remarks we seem to have a theory of value, as *determined* by demand, and *measured* by money, to which modern economists would have little to object, save that the seller's cost of production must also be taken into account, as well as the buyer's demand.

Both in the *Ethics* and the *Politics* Aristotle regards money as a thing depending upon convention (*νόμος*) rather than nature: its very etymology (and Aristotle sets store by etymologies) attests its artificial character.³ But we learn from

Value of money—conventional or natural?

¹ In an association of exchange (*ἀλλακτικὴ κοινωνία*), justice, in the sense of proportionate requital, must be the principle followed (*Eth.*, 1132 b 32). "It is this reciprocal rendering of an equivalent amount of dissimilar things . . . that holds the State together" as an economic association (*Pol.*, 1261 a 0, and Newman's note *ad locum*). Thus the theory of justice leads to a false theory of value (because it leads to the belief in a *justum pretium*, *infra*, p. 384).

² To Aristotle demand, or need (*χρεία*), holds men together in an association of exchange, inducing them to exchange their goods, just as, in Plato's view, it brought men together into the primary form of society. Holding men together as a *single* principle, it is the one *common measure* by which the goods they exchange are valued. The nexus is also the standard. In a state of barter demand serves by itself as the measure of value, and makes couches commensurable with house, producing the equation 5 couches=1 house. Except for demand, there is no commensurability and therefore no possibility of equation. But where men have passed from an economy in kind to a monetary economy, by agreeing upon a "currency," that currency may be said to form the concrete and objective form of the subjective standard formed by demand. It makes objects commensurable, and renders an equation possible—not in itself (for only demand can do that), but as the representative of demand. As an objective standard, money also forms an objective nexus: it holds the association of exchange together, being as it were a demand held in reserve by its holders, and giving them a guarantee that, though they may not demand at present, yet they can at any time demand effectively.

³ Currency (*νομισμα*) is from the same root as convention (*νόμος*). Cf. p. 386.

determined, like that of other commodities, by demand and supply. In that case money will have a natural, and not a conventional value.¹ It is a natural corollary of this view of money, that it must fluctuate in value, like other commodities, with the fluctuations of demand; and the *Ethics* tells us, that this is the case. "Money has not always the same value, though it always tends to remain steady."² And thus it would appear that here, as in regard to slavery, Aristotle is the best critic of himself: he recognises, after all, that money is a commodity, possessing a use, with a value determined by the demand, which it "represents," and fluctuating according to the fluctuations of that demand.

From this digression on money we must now return to ^{The middle} profit-making of the baser sort, to which, as we have already ^{man con-} seen, money forms the bridge of transition. A cumbrous exchange by barter is pursued only by those who *need*: an easy exchange by money attracts those who *covet*. As a medium of exchange, money facilitates the rise of the dealer who stands midway between the two producers: itself a "middle" thing, it naturally begets the middleman. And with the middleman comes evil. He is a channel through which goods pass from A to B, and from B to A; but he is a channel which intercepts in their transmission no inconsiderable share of the goods transmitted. He grows at the expense of A and B alike. He is the parasite of the working world: instead of finding his own sustenance, he lives by abstracting from others part of the sustenance which they have acquired for themselves. To a modern mind even parasitism may seem a part of Nature: to Aristotle the parasite of exchange is unnatural and immoral. The evil of parasitism is not only to be found in the loss of the workers who suffer: it also appears in the degradation of the parasite itself.³ The dealer who acquires his sustenance at the expense of his fellows is not content with mere sustenance, or

¹ The intrinsic utility of the precious metals lies in their appeal to the desire for ornament, which is primitive and universal, and almost as deep as the desire for food. In that they thus appeal to a fundamental element of human nature, they have certainly a "natural" value.

² *Eth.*, 1133 b 13.

³ Similarly biology tells us that the parasite in nature is also degraded, in the sense that it suffers an atrophy of the higher organs, by which it might have found its own sustenance for itself.

have once more surrendered themselves to treating as the whole what is only a part or ingredient. They have sought pleasure, and nothing but pleasure, and pleasure *ad infinitum*; and for the sake of unlimited pleasure they have sought unlimited wealth¹.

What shall we say of this condemnation of the middleman, which makes him first a parasite, and then a moral enormity, who by the very nature of his position has gone awry from virtue? That the middleman is not necessarily a parasite a very brief consideration of his function will show. If he is not a producer of commodities, he certainly renders a service. He gives his time to the economic community, and he gives it for the discharge of a function which is necessary to the community. He does a service to A when he takes his commodities off his hands; he does a service to B, when he provides him with what he requires.² Those who contribute their services are not the least members of an association of exchange: on the contrary, it is easier to produce most commodities than it is to render services, like that of the middleman, which require no inconsiderable powers of mind. That it is easy to shut our eyes to an intangible service does not justify us in defrauding it of its reward. A must pay X for taking the goods he desires to sell: B must pay X for providing the goods he desires to buy. In reality, X is an agent in production, who must be paid like other agents. One cannot say that the production of an article has ceased, until it has reached the consumer. Exchange is the last of the stages of production: it is as much a stage of production as transport; it is no less a stage of production, than manufacture, or than agriculture itself.³ As the last link in the

The middleman performs an economic service

¹ The man who makes money his aim does not really desire the mere satisfaction of possessing a number of counters. The money is a symbol of something which is his real aim. To many that aim is the sense of success and capacity which the visible symbol inspires: they have pitted their calculations in a game with chance and their fellows, and they like to feel that they have beaten both. Aristotle, however, only contemplates a more vulgar class, who have made pleasure their aim, and who, seeking unlimited pleasure, desire unlimited wealth as a means to its attainment. In thus considering wealth as a means, he somewhat contradicts his previous view of the nature of the profit-maker, who, we were told, made wealth an end.

² Plato had recognised this service; *cf. supra*, p. 106, n. 1.

³ We use "produce" in English as meaning not only "to create" but also "to bring forward when required," as when we speak of producing a witness or a document. Economic production embraces both meanings; and the middleman is an agent of production more especially in the latter sense.

proved to be a natural and necessary thing, because it is the condition of moral growth.

In developing this line of defence, which is indeed the ultimate and only defence of any fact or institution of human life, Aristotle appeals to two virtues in particular. Liberality is impossible, he argues, without private possessions. One cannot have the virtue of giving, if one has nothing to give. It is easy to answer that what makes charity is not the thing given, but the spirit of giving; and that such a spirit depends upon no external conditions. It is easy to say, again, that if private property is to be justified by the fact that it is sometimes connected with liberality, persecution may be justified, because it is sometimes connected with faith. But Aristotle was thinking of the active virtue of a civic life, of which public munificence was a part; and he meant that the fulness of civic virtue would be lost to the citizens, if they had nothing to give to the State. But far more important, in any case, is his appeal to the sense of personality and its concomitant virtue of self-respect (*φιλαυτία*), as the ultimate foundation of property. After all, each of us must have his own, just because he is himself. Our growth and expansion is conditional upon the annexation, of each new sphere as it were, in our progress. To such annexation we have a right, just because we have left the mark of ourselves impressed on the sphere of our growth. Not only the growth, but the very sense of self, the feeling of a personality, is conditional upon possessing something which makes its expression possible. I cannot know myself, unless I can express my will (which is myself) in action; I cannot express it in action, unless I have a medium for such expression. I come to know myself, through what I have made my own: my property is a mirror, which reflects myself to me. In this way property is "realised will"; and it stands justified as such—provided always that such will is a right will. It is the reflection of the self, and it is thereby justified—provided always that the self reflected is the moral self. Unless these conditions be satisfied, there can be no right to property. Every right postulates a recognition by society, and society will never recognise any casual will, or any chance determination of the self. It will only recognise a will that is set towards its own

Moral justification of private property

prop. is realised will

possession will bring its economic and moral advantages: common use, not merely dictated by law, but flowing from a proper spirit, will issue in that unanimity which Plato so greatly desired. But it is to be noticed that Aristotle conceives of this communism which he suggests as very different from that of Plato, not only in its external working, but also in its inner meaning. Whereas (so it seems to him) Plato has attempted to reform humanity by readjusting its material environment, he will rather seek to reform mankind by improving the spiritual condition of the soul within, and trusting it to adapt itself to its environment. It is the preaching of the Gospels: "Mend your hearts, and not your governments"; "the kingdom of Heaven is within you". If society is awry, as Plato felt and said, it is because its members are themselves awry. It is not property or anything external which causes disunion, but a spirit of disunion; and if you abolish property to-day, that spirit, which has hitherto issued in disputes about private property, will at once issue in disputes about the distribution of the common fund. It is a well for ever springing from beneath, whose flow one cannot check by putting a finger over the vent at which it issues: it will only burst a new opening for itself. No material cure will heal a spiritual evil: only spiritual means will produce a spiritual result. To heal disunion and division of spirit, one must employ a common education, which will put all men on the same spiritual level, and initiate them into the same spiritual community. Then, but then only, will they be a single and indivisible community, when they are a community in the spirit; and without communion in the spirit, a material communion *will not* abolish, and *may* intensify, the spirit of disunion.

This is very true, but not a fair criticism of Plato. Plato had never thought that material means would of themselves reform humanity: he had not even thought that they ought to be the first means employed for that end. Spiritual means—a common education—had been his primary object; and a scheme of education is the subject which engages his attention most closely and most constantly. It is merely from an excess of caution that he has recourse to material means, and it is merely as a reinforcement of the scheme of education that they

Justice of
Aristotle's
criticism of
Plato

natural instinct; it may be a moral association, based on virtue, in which either helps the other by example to pursue and to realise the Good. (iii.) But much as the children and their parents owe to their association in the family, the slave owes still more. He is more than an animate instrument, only because he has a place in the family, and a share in its inspiration; and with the disappearance of the family, his guide and friend is gone. To abolish the family is to abolish all these things. It is to sweep away as capable of perversion an instrument which is capable of producing a wise and loving father and mother, disciplined and educated children, trained and obedient servants. It is to deny a primary instinct its due satisfaction, which Nature herself had intended to give. Deep as the instinct of self-love, in which property is rooted, comes the instinct of loving and caring for others, in which the family is rooted. In truth, this instinct of loving and caring for others is but one aspect of the true self-love of which Aristotle speaks. For if, as has been said, the self is as wide as the sum of its interests—if it is all that it loves, then a man may be said to have made part of himself the whole of his family; and that family has thus become, as much as his property, an extension of himself. Through it he realises his will for righteousness: his family bears the impress of that will, and is a "realised will" in the same sense as property, with this difference, that its members have themselves a will of their own. To abolish the family is therefore to truncate the self, and to limit the will.

It may be objected, that Plato was fully aware that self is the sum of a man's interests, and that far from wishing to limit or truncate it, he desired to widen and fulfil it, by increasing the sum of its interests. And this is true. And so is Aristotle's objection true—that to widen is to make shallow, it may be indeed to drain away altogether, the interests of the ordinary man. Some there are indeed, but they are few, to whom a great cause is more than a group of persons, and who can give wife and child and much that men care for to identify themselves with this wider and fuller being. Ordinary humanity seeks its fulfilment in a narrower sphere; and of the vast majority it is true, that the love of their family (along with an interest in their profession and its circle) is, and is quite

§ 6. And thus we come to Aristotle's general criticism of Plato's whole position. In his eyes, Plato had exaggerated the element of community, or fellowship, which a State should possess. Of the two possible alternatives,—that a State should mean the communion of its members in everything, or that it should only mean their communion in certain things, and should leave the rest to the individual—he had preferred the former. By increasing the sphere of communion he had imagined that he would increase the sense of community, which Aristotle thinks he had thus made the be-all and end-all of the State. Assuming that Plato had made this unity the end and endeavour of the State, Aristotle criticises this conception of the end of the State on three grounds. First, the end or good of any object must, as Plato had himself argued, be something which serves and preserves that object. And an end, again, is something of which one cannot have too much: it is only a means that is limited, and the more one has of an end, the better one is. But unity is an end such, that if it be pursued thoroughly, it will destroy, and not preserve, the State of which it is the end. It is an end of which one *may* have too much. An absolutely unitarian city will be a city of one man—and even that will not be unitarian, since as the myth of the Phædrus tells us, there is a constant division between the two parts of the human soul. But this is a *reductio ad absurdum*; for the State must obviously be composed of more men than one. Secondly, Aristotle argues, if the State is a communion, its very character postulates that it is composed, not only of several, but also of unlike members. We have already seen that every communion or association (*κοινωνία*) is necessarily constituted of dissimilar members, whose dissimilarity makes possible that mutual exchange of different services for which all associations exist. Men who were like one another would never associate together: it is just the hope of finding a complement to themselves in the different capacities of their fellows that draws men together in societies. Differentiation is therefore the necessary basis of any communion; and homogeneity implies a stage too low to be called one of association. In a city, which is the highest form of association, we get the completest differentiation. Ideally, there is a permanent differentiation of rulers and ruled, each

Aristotle's
criticism of
Platonic
striving for
Unity

in the *Republic*, Plato's feeling for the necessity of dissimilar parts and complementary functions. May we therefore say, that true as were Aristotle's propositions in themselves, they do not form a valid criticism of Plato, because Plato had realised, and had shown that he had realised, every consideration which Aristotle accuses him of having forgotten? Hardly; for though Plato does see the need of differentiation, and though he attempts to secure it by distinguishing three classes for three separate functions, the fact remains, that the zeal for unity nevertheless consumed him. The third estate disappears from view early in the *Republic*; and the other two, treated as one, seem to lose all differentiation in a uniform system of common life. Emptied of themselves, they are conformed to the type of the one and indivisible Idea which the State is to realise: the oneness of that Idea annihilates the individual to assimilate him to itself. It is some feeling of this which Aristotle had, and which may be said to be natural and just. It was the general quarrel of Aristotle with Plato that he misconceived the relation of the universal to the particular: that he postulated a One "outside" and annihilating the Many, whereas the truth is that the One is inside and "predicable of" the Many, which retain their individuality while they are united through a common predicable. This quarrel appears with regard to ethics: for Aristotle there is no such unity of virtue as Plato had held to exist. It appears again here in this attack upon Plato's conception of the unity of the State; for that unity, it seems to Aristotle, is made into a One outside and annihilating the many citizens, whereas it should be a communion including them all, and depending upon the fact that they are manifold, and, as manifold, mutually complementary.¹

Difference with regard to the nature of the State's unity is one of the fundamental differences between political thinkers. Thinkers of the school of the social contract have conceived of the State as legally united in a *societas*; and Aristotle criticises

True nature of the State's unity

¹ Aristotle emphasises only his opposition to Plato; but Plato is none the less the fountain of his political theory, as has been again and again suggested in previous chapters. The teleological conception of the State in general; the theory of the mixed constitution and the principles of the classification of States in particular—these, and much more, descended to Aristotle from his master.

differentiation, in comparing the relation of the citizen to the State with that of the limb to the body, Aristotle was really suggesting the highest unity as the aim of the State. With unity thus conceived, self-sufficiency does not quarrel: on the contrary, such unity is the only true avenue to it. Yet it is but an avenue; and the true end of the State must be, not to make its members one, but to raise them to the fulness of their being, by encouraging the highest activities of a good life.

great population only means difficulties of government.¹ What is necessary is the maximum of quantity necessary and useful for the proper discharge of the functions of the State. Whether we regard the rulers, and their function of sitting in judgment, or the ruled, and their function of awarding honours in proportion to desert, we see in either case that the population must be limited in size. The rulers cannot afford to be ignorant of the character of those whom they judge, or the people unacquainted with the merits of those whom they honour. Ideally, the population must be small enough for every citizen to know something of all the rest; otherwise the rulers will "judge crooked judgments," and the people will delight to honour the undeserving. These considerations impose a maximum size on the State: a minimum is to be found in that function of the State which Aristotle terms the achievement of self-sufficingness. A small population cannot be sufficient unto itself: it is necessarily dependent on others. Teleology and the doctrine of the mean thus combine to prove, that the ideal State is one not too populous for citizens and magistrates to be mutually acquainted, and yet populous enough to be self-sufficient. The former of these conditions holds good of municipal life to-day, in so far as it would seem that municipal offices are better filled in smaller towns: the latter is a condition with which only a nation, and not all nations, can nowadays comply. And this well shows the character of the Greek city-state—as intimate and as intense in its life as a city, as wide and as all-embracing in its aims as a State.

But we must remember, as peculiarly Greek and as necessarily resulting from Aristotle's teleology, that this estimate of population has regard only to the integral parts of the State—to those who participate fully in its privileges and its life and its end. "It is perhaps necessary," Aristotle adds, "that there should be a large number of slaves, and numbers of resident aliens and foreigners;" but these are not of the essence of the State, and their number may be left to chance. It matters little or nothing that the magistrates or people should know who or what they are; though another canon of size which

The limits
size of Ar-
istotle's ide-
State and
reasons

¹ "Who could command such a population in war? What herald, who was not a Stentor, could make his voice heard through its ranks?" (1328 b 5).

if liberty rejoices in the chosen music of sea and mountains, it has not loved the flat plains that lie along the great rivers of Asia. But Greece was for Aristotle distinct from both Europe and Asia. As it stood geographically mid-way between the two, so it nourished a people which formed the mean between the races of either—a people which mixed in a just measure the spirit of the one with the skill of the other, and combined freedom with order in the constitution of its cities. There were indeed diversities in Greece: there were Greeks who inclined more to the European type, and Greeks who inclined more to the Asiatic, as well as Greeks who followed the golden mean. But the ideal population of an ideal State may be roughly defined as a population of Greeks, characterised by quickness of wits and vigour of spirit. Of these two qualities Aristotle is inclined, in opposition to Plato, to emphasise the latter. From spirit, he thinks, there comes not only the love of freedom, but also the spirit of authority and the impulse to friendship; and freedom, authority and friendship are very vital principles of every State.

agricultural
class one of
aves

Just as Aristotle's estimate of the quantity of the population had only regard to the integral and essential members of the State, so with this definition of its quality. It is only the full citizen who must be a Greek; and the ideal State has need of many members besides the full citizen. It needs an agricultural population, for instance; and who will be the tillers of its soil? They will be slaves, we are told, but slaves who are not all members of the same stock, nor possessed of a spirit too lofty for their position. They will be a congeries of non-Hellenic races, united in nothing except an obedient temper and a want of that spirit which every Greek possessed: they will be a body whose own disunion, as well as the temper of its members, fits it for nothing but subjection. If slaves cannot be had, the ideal State may content itself with a class of cultivators in the condition of serfs; but they too must be non-Hellenic in race and temper. This was a condition which it would have been hard to fulfil: serfs were generally conquered Greeks, who had been masters of the soil before conquest came. This was the case with the Helots of Sparta; and homogeneous in race and spirited in temper, the Helots were always as a great ambush, lying in wait

or an opportunity to fall upon their masters. Probably because
 he feels that there is this difficulty with a population of serfs,
 Aristotle prefers to people his ideal State with slaves, the
 weepings of Asia, speaking a Babel of tongues, but all ready
 to cringe to their masters. It might not be an ideal thing; but
 it was a better thing than serfdom at Sparta, where the serf
 could gladly have "eaten his master raw," and the masters
 made it one of the first duties of their sons that they should
 go on "the secret mission," which slew the serf by stealth in
 the night, if he promised to be dangerous.

A population neither too large nor too small, comprised of ^{The territory}
 Greeks in whom neither spirit nor intellect predominates, is ^{of the ideal}
 therefore Aristotle's postulate for the ideal State, regarded per-
 sonally and as a body of men. But a State is also a certain
 territory; and the proper amount and nature of that territory
 are questions next in order of importance to that of the popula-
 tion. It must be large enough to enable all the citizens to live
 in leisure, and in a manner not only temperate, as Plato had
 said in the *Laws*, but also liberal. In other words, it must be
 large enough for the moral purpose of the State: it must pro-
 vide at once the detachment from material cares, and the neces-
 sary furnishing of external goods, which the realisation of that
 purpose requires. The quality of the soil, again, must be deter-
 mined with due regard to that self-sufficiency, which it is one
 of the aims of the State to secure; and the territory must be
 such as produces crops of all kinds, and makes its inhabitants in-
 dependent of foreign supply. If the territory is at once sufficient
 for the moral purpose of the State and for its material independ-
 ence of other States—if it be large enough for the latter, and
 not too large for the former, it will meet the great purposes
 of the State (purposes which before decided the population, as
 they are here made to determine the territory), and it only re-
 mains to regulate its distribution. Two problems here arise:
 one concerns the relation of the city to the rest of the territory;
 the other the division of the territory among the citizens of the
 state.

It is of great moment, in Aristotle's eyes, to determine the ^{The city}
 position and the construction of the city. The city is the brain
 of the State: the adjacent territory is merely the body which

der to draw readily upon its resources, the city should lie by the sea, and enjoy the advantages of a ready transit by water of troops and its commodities. This, however, raises a question, which had been much discussed in Greece, and to which Aristotle consequently devotes some attention. Does the stability and order of a State suffer or gain from the proximity of the sea? An unfavourable view of the influence of the sea is maintained in the *Laws*; and Plato argues that it means the risk of an alien immigration, which may make for the corruption of the State. But that view had been far more ardently championed, it would appear, by thinkers of oligarchical tenets, who hated the sea because they hated democracy, and because they regarded sea-power as tending to promote democracy. The sea, they argued, not only brought aliens, who had been bred in alien habits and under alien laws, and were therefore a hindrance to good government: it also encouraged the risk of large populations, which, as Aristotle himself acknowledges, brought with them democratic aspirations. In any case, they might have added, a navy like that of Athens, manned by the lower classes, is a force which of itself tends to promote democracy. On the other hand, Aristotle pleads, these things, though they may result from the proximity of the sea, are not in themselves inevitable results. Laws can be made to regulate the influx of foreigners, and to determine when, and under what conditions, they may have dealings with the members of the State. A navy can be manned in such a way as to avoid that mass of oarsmen, which formed a large part of the Athenian people, and served as the basis of Athenian democracy. The citizens can serve as marines: oarsmen can be recruited from the ranks of the serfs who cultivate the territory of the ideal State; and with citizens in the higher and more vital branch of naval service, the balance of the State will be secured. If the noxious results of contiguity to the sea can thus be avoided, there are positive advantages which it brings. The safety of a State will be more certainly assured, if it can meet and deliver attacks by sea as well as by land. The prosperity of a State depends upon its being able to export its own superfluities freely, in order to acquire sufficient commodities in return for the satisfaction of its wants. It was easy to exceed this limit, as Athens had done: a State might aim

rovided with walls: the Spartan boast, that the best walls of city were the bodies of her citizens, was to Aristotle an antiquated conception, only suited to the days in which engineering was in its infancy. A city should make its walls at once a ring of beauty and of terror; and it will find that the best security of peace is to be prepared for war. Finally, streets ought to be driven through the city in a manner which shall form a mean between the straggling old alley of the past and the new fashion, which Hippodamus had introduced, of scientific lines and avenues. The former were easily defended in spite of their inconvenience: the latter are indeed convenient, but as inconvenient for the attack of the enemy as for the business of the citizen. The mean between the two will be taken, if the streets are arranged, like the rows of vines in a vineyard, in the pattern of a quincunx.¹

And where shall the public places of the city be set? The temples must occupy some far-seen height, which is at once a natural throne, and a place of vantage where images and offerings may safely repose. In these temples the chief magistrates take their common meals: the far-seen height contains, in one, cathedral and *hôtel de ville*.² At the foot of the hill, but still on high ground, lies the great square (*áγopά*), in which the citizens from time to time meet for political business, but which normally serves as a place for the enjoyment of leisure. It will be a place of beauty, a place of running water and whispering rees, a fit abode for the leisure of the free, for whom it is jealously guarded by the law from mechanics and farmers and all base and vulgar souls. By its side will stand the gymnasium of the elders, to which they may turn when talk or siesta is lone; and meanwhile the young men, on whom devolves the whole burden of war, have their station, and take their common meals, in guard-rooms and towers along the circuit of the walls,

¹ *I.e.* :

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x x x
 x x
x x x
  x x
x x x
  x x

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The streets will run transversely, and an enemy who wishes to get to the centre of the town will have to zig-zag slowly to his objective.

² Cathedrals served as *hôtels de ville* for some of the French communes of the twelfth century.

low the Platonic principle of specialisation, and assign ^{The allocation of the functions of government} persons to the separate functions? That is Nature's plan, as Aristotle tells us: she is no maker of Delphic ^s which will serve more purposes than one. But the vice of man varies. In some constitutions all men share in function, as is the case in a democracy—the constitution of the “versatile” man, or the “busybody,” as Plato had preferred to say. In others the theory of the right man in the place is followed; and oligarchies profess to be based on principle. In deciding the practice of the ideal State, Aristotle naturally begins with the two great functions of war and government. Was it the wisest plan to give the province of military affairs into the hands of a special class, as the increased professionalism of the times, especially visible in this century, seemed naturally to demand; or was this only to increase the danger of subversion of the constitution by that class, and were the citizens who governed the State to be also soldiers? The solution which Aristotle gives is meant to reconcile both possibilities, and to give the advantages while avoiding the dangers of a trained military class. Different qualities are obviously necessary for war and for government; he suggests that the quality needed for war is exactly that which characterises youth, and the quality required for government that which belongs to age. War needs the spirit and energy of youth: government needs the experience and reflection of age. Let the same men therefore be soldiers in youth, and rulers in age, and the State will gain the advantage of specialisation, without running the risk of division into two opposing interests.¹ The soldier will not be hostile to the government, which he will one day be a member; and a prudent government will restrain the fire of youth, which will be willing to accept its interference. The rule of the aged will thus prevent the ideal State from declining into a war-state on the model of Sparta, and from preferring a practical life of con-

This plan will have the advantage which Plato sought to gain by the scheme of the *Republic*, without the defect which Aristotle traces in that scheme. But Plato had said much the same as Aristotle here says himself: soldiers were the aged, his soldiers the young. The one difference is that a few of Plato's soldiers could ever hope to be rulers, while all Aristotle's soldiers will one day be rulers.

ARISTOTLE'S THEORY OF EDUCATION

3. The ideal State has now been equipped with all the material conditions which it depends upon Fortune to give. We have supposed Fortune to have endowed it liberally in every way; and we have constructed a government, which will be ideally fitted for using human art to second Fortune's

On human art—on knowledge and purpose aforethought now depends to make the State as good spiritually as it is materially. By what means, and in what ways, will government best attempt to promote the realisation of the ideal life? It is a wide question, and its full solution must involve a theory of legislation and of punishment, as well as of education. But the ideal State is only sketched by Aristotle in the rough. The account of its constitution, which has just been discussed, is a bare outline of the most general principles: nothing is said of their application. We are not told, for instance, how the deliberative assembly will be organised, or what it will discuss: we hear nothing of the offices of the executive or their powers: nothing is said of the judicature. So it is with Aristotle's account of the action of the government in promoting the ideal life. We have only a treatment of the subject of education, fuller indeed and more detailed than the treatment of any other subject connected with the ideal State, but yet incomplete.¹

To appreciate the educational theory which Aristotle provides, one must notice, that he starts from a different point of view from that of the modern theorist. In the first place, it is obvious that he primarily aims at providing an education which will adapt its subject to membership of a State. Education is part of politics: it has a political aim. This does not mean that Aristotle wishes the young to be instructed in the history of their State, its present politics, the aims of its policy, and the duty of some day using a vote in the assembly wisely and judiciously. It means that he wishes the young

Aristotle's
general view
of education

But the subject of education must necessarily demand most consideration in an ideal State, in which (ideal citizens being postulated) the representative or judicial aspect of the State disappears, as Plato had urged, and its educative or educational aspect comes to the front. A theory of punishment is therefore, after all, hardly required by Aristotle's plan.

tively regulating marriage, it has by negative means sought to prevent the perpetuation of a poor physique. And it is possible that it may even actually interfere with marriage in the future, upon moral rather than physical grounds, and may, by regulating the conditions under which the feeble-minded can marry, attempt to limit the growth of a population, which cannot help, but seriously hinders, its life. It would therefore seem that we acknowledge the aim of Aristotle (a proper national physique), though we do not use the means which he advocates for attaining that aim; and that, again, we may yet use that means (the regulation of marriage), though for a moral rather than a physical purpose.¹

The first seven years of a child's life, between birth and the age at which training in a system of gymnastics enforced by the State begins, are to be spent at home. Aristotle is not without many wise hints about the problems which occupy a mother's mind, the proper feeding of children and the right ways to introduce a child to the knowledge of good and evil. Till the age of five he would impose no lessons and no tasks upon a child: it is a time of games which should be mimicries of future earnest, a time of tales and stories, which should be foreshadowings of future knowledge. These things will be in the hands of officials of the State, "inspectors of children," who will always bear in mind the truth, that first impressions are freshest and longest lived—

Quo semel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem
Testa diu—

and they will accordingly keep young eyes and ears from seeing or hearing any unclean thing, lest it sink into the soul, and poison life at its source. The last two years of early childhood, from five to seven, will be spent by children as spectators of the training which they are themselves shortly to receive, particularly perhaps of gymnastics.

Education runs in cycles of seven years; and as seven years have been devoted to life at home, so within the period during which the young are trained by the State, there are two epochs

¹ At the same time, the aim of Aristotle in regulating marriage is ultimately moral: he wishes for a good physique, as the proper habitation of a good moral disposition.

in which each stage duly corresponds to the growth of man being who is its subject. Body is prior to soul in the irrational element is prior to the rational. The element of education must accordingly begin with the training of the body, proceed to the training of appetite, and then to the training of reason. At the age of the body, of desire, must come the training of the body, of desire, of reason. Were the appetite trained during the age of the body the training would be wasted, because the untrained body would reject lessons of self-control, to which it had not already physically inured. For it must not be forgotten that the end of each stage prior to reason, if an end in itself, is also a means to the next. In the period of the growth of the body the body must be trained; but it must be trained in such a way as to observe and to prepare the training of the desires which are to come. From this it follows that gymnastics is not merely gymnastics: it is already something of a moral training from the first, and the light of a moral purpose will grow clearer and plainer, as gymnastics draws nearer to the dawn of a fully moral education.

It is teaching that gymnastics is no end in itself, but a means to a further end, and that it must be informed by the end to which that further end, leads to conclusions which are still valid. A means is always limited by the end which it serves, and there must be a limit to gymnastics. This is what Aristotle accuses the Greeks of having forgotten. On the one hand, gymnastics tended to pass into athletics. It was the art of those who had made gymnastic exercises their profession, and to whom gymnastics had become an end in itself. This was doubly mischievous. It made gymnastics base and mechanical, diverted from the use of reason to the pursuit of virtue to things material. It spoiled the purpose of the legislator: "the athletic habit of the Greeks of little good either for the kind of bodily fitness which they needed, or for health, or for fertility". On the other hand, gymnastics as pursued at Sparta, while directed towards the attainment of a civic virtue, were made so severe as to be, in the belief that such severity would produce courageous and true courage, Aristotle feels, is no true courage: true

Cultivation of
the Mean in
gymnastics

moving impediments from its path; and it would set free a natural instinct of self-development, which is more universally felt in physical things than in moral.

The period of education in which the liberal arts of music, letters, and drawing are studied is only partially discussed by Aristotle. Two questions, the one general, the other more particular, can alone be said to receive any solution. The first concerns the aim and purpose towards which education in the arts generally should be directed: the second touches the value of music in particular as an instrument of education. In the light of what has already been said, there can be little doubt about the purpose which Aristotle would assign to instruction in the liberal arts. It can only be the promotion of virtue. But a consideration of contemporary methods does not, he confesses, leave so simple an impression. Some may seem designed to the promotion of virtue: others profess to teach what will be of use in after life. And Aristotle admits, seeking as ever to absorb the element of truth which any theory or practice may contain, that there are some studies which must be pursued with a view to their utility, and because they are absolutely necessary. Such studies are reading, writing, and a certain amount of arithmetic and geometry. They embrace part of "letters" and part of "drawing"; they form the 'technical' element of education. They are needed for the management of a household, and for many branches of political administration; they are the necessary means for the acquisition of a species of knowledge, which is valuable in itself. Pursued for their use, these studies must not be pursued to an excess. There is a limit beyond which the pursuit of a liberal art becomes illiberal. Excessive attention to any one part disturbs the proportion and balance of the whole mind, and results in that "professionalism," if it may be so termed, which a free-man should avoid.¹

But if it be admitted that the non-artistic side of education is within the sphere of utility, there still remains the artistic; and what are we to say of that? In other words, what will be

Purpose of
education in
the arts

The value of
musical
instruction

¹ To write e.g. a copper-plate hand is βάρανον: it belongs to the slave-copyist, not to the freeman.

much to say of the proper literature for the study of the young. More might have been said about "drawing". We are told that it makes men capable of perceiving beauty of form, and we may guess that Aristotle, like Plato, regarded a sense of beauty as akin to the moral sense; but we are not told in what way, and with what object, drawing would be taught in the ideal State. Nothing again is said of the last and highest stage, in which reason is elicited by a study of science, and set free to control the passions for itself, and to contemplate freely the meaning of itself and the world. Much as he resembles Plato in his views on education, Aristotle is at once less complete and less systematic than Plato. He gives scattered hints, rather than an ordered whole; and the system of philosophy into which they fit is but briefly mentioned. We are left to fill out the scheme, and to fit in the details for ourselves. But apart from this, there is little difference between Aristotle and Plato. Both have the same fundamental view of education as a training of character: both have the same high conception of art as influencing character. The main difference between the two arises from Aristotle's principle of "following Nature" and giving to each stage of growth its appropriate instruction—a principle which induces him to prolong gymnastics, and to defer letters and music to a later age than Plato had contemplated. With this respect for Nature there goes a certain respect for facts, such as we should naturally expect. Not only does Aristotle build his theory of education more in the light of Spartan experience and the contemporary practice of Greece; but he has, for instance, a wider and more catholic view than appears in Plato of the uses which music actually serves. He fits music less into his theory, and considers it more by itself, and in its own full possibilities, as a means of relaxation, or of purification, or of spending leisure, as well as of moral instruction.

It is henceforth to discuss perversions (for the actual, in the sphere of politics, is only too often the perverted); it is to inquire into the setting right of what is out of joint. We turn from physiology to pathology and therapeutics. And here we must first enquire: What were the data which Aristotle studied? What had been the history of the Greek State which he sought to reform, and what were its prevalent forms and prominent features in his own day and generation?

The cycle of political affairs in Greece had brought many ^{Constitutional changes} changes. We have already seen the psychological scheme of change sketched by Plato. Aristotle has more than one scheme to suggest. In an aporetic passage in the third book¹ he suggests that monarchy came first, because it was difficult to find several men of distinguished merit in the small States of early Greece, and because the rudeness of the times enabled single individuals to emerge as distinguished benefactors of their fellows. In the progress of time, distinguished merit could be pleaded by several of the members of the State: the days of heroes were numbered, and a constitution arose in which office was shared among the few. These were the times of aristocracy; but the magistrates yielded to temptation, and began to make their private profit from public affairs. Wealth became the end and standard of political life, and oligarchies arose. Tyranny followed, and, in the wake of tyranny, democracy. Democracy was the inevitable reaction against the exclusiveness of oligarchies, and democracy seemed to Aristotle, in view of the increased population of States in his own days, to have almost become the only possible constitution. This sketch is meant principally to explain the decay of monarchy, and its impossibility in Aristotle's time. Another sketch of constitutional change, in the sixth book,² follows on the suggestion that the "polity" should make the possession of armour the qualification of its citizens. From this point of view Aristotle connects changes in the constitution with military changes. Cavalry was the arm in which States put their trust in the days after the fall of monarchy: men had not as yet the knowledge of tactics which the proper use of infantry requires; and cavalry implied an oligarchy. As infantry came into vogue, the con-

¹ *Pol.*, iii., c. xv. (1286 b 7-22).

² *Ibid.*, vi. (iv.), c. xiii. (1297 b 16-28).

and was the most democratic of all the executive organs saw itself stripped of power in those States, where the receipt of pay enabled the assembly to meet frequently enough to despatch all business of itself. Pay was indeed the characteristic of a democracy: its citizens were in truth "political beings," since politics furnished their weekly business and their weekly wages. The executive, the judicature and the deliberative might all be paid, though in some States only those boards of magistrates which had a common table, and those meetings of the assembly which were stated and regular, would receive salary. It would therefore appear that the characteristics of democracy are, socially, the predominance of the poorer classes and the relaxation of any moral discipline (since numbers are everything, and each "lives as he likes"); and, politically, the sacrifice of a divided executive to an overgrown deliberative.

We are now in a position to discuss the varieties of democracy, and to explain their differences, in the light of these considerations; and we shall then be able to arrive at some comprehensive view of the meaning of Greek democracy in general. Four main varieties of democracy may be traced. The first of these is marked by a genuine equality, in the sense that the law assigns as much weight to the rich as it does to the poor. Both share alike in political power; but the poor form an inevitable majority, and may therefore be termed the ultimate sovereign. The class which forms the majority in such a democracy is the agricultural class. The institutions by which it is marked flow from this fact. The farmer has little property and little leisure: he cannot attend an assembly frequently, even if he would. But he has no wish to do so: he prefers his business to politics. Politics, in the stage of which Aristotle is speaking,¹ means honour only: business means profits; and the sober farmer prefers profits to honour. A people, Aristotle adds, will voluntarily suffer an oligarchy or tyranny, if it is left to the uninterrupted pursuit of its own affairs (the more readily if, like the Tudor *τυραννίς*, such governments actively encourage the prosperity of their subjects). The farmer, then, will have no desire for office: he will make the law sovereign, and confine himself to attending the minimum

¹ He seems to be speaking of a time and a thing that is past.

was partly absorbed by the cares of their own possessions. Now that the people had leisure for affairs, the demagogues were quick to provide affairs for their leisure. They referred every decision to the people: it was to their interest to do so, because they could influence the decision of the people. The law was thus disregarded in order that popular decrees might rule; and the magistrates were similarly dethroned. The people were told that they were the best judges: they gladly received the invitation to judge; and the powers of the executive slipped from its hands. Supreme over the laws and over the magistrates, the people thus became, as it were, a composite sovereign—a sovereign not unlike the tyrant in its disrespect for law, and like the tyrant attracting a crowd of flatterers to its court—the so-called demagogues. Parallel to tyranny in its disregard for law, parallel also, for the same reason, to the “dynasty” (or hereditary oligarchy ruling in contempt of law), extreme democracy, like both of these, may be denied the name of a constitution. There is no constitution, where there is no law; and here there are no laws, enacting general principles to be applied in detail by the executive: there are only decrees themselves dealing with detail. There is nothing fixed or determined: life is a chaos in which anything may happen, but nothing can be foreseen. The essence of a State is that men should live by known rules, which will enable them to recognise in advance the results of their action: the very savage clothes himself in a saving garb of custom. But here all goes by hazard: it is the motto of such a State, that

’Tis best to live at random, as one may.

Particularly upon the upper classes fell this horror of darkness and uncertainty. In the old days, when they had ruled themselves, they had loved discipline and order: the young had been enjoined to show modesty before the old, the slave to go quietly about his work, the women to stay within their quarters. With extreme democracy descended the hubbub of a “life at random”: the quiet fixity of the old life yielded to confusion, and discipline slipped from the shoulders of wife and child and slave. In the old days, again, each had known his place, and the upper classes had been united in exclusive associations of

were subjected to a stringent responsibility. Month by month their accounts were audited by a committee of the council: month by month the assembly must renew each magistrate's tenure of office. At any moment an "information" might be laid before the council by any private citizen against any of the officials. At the end of their year of office a final audit of accounts had to be undergone; and a board of audit (*εὔθυνοι*) sat to hear accusations against them with regard to any of their acts during the past year. On the other hand, the Board of Generals must, at any rate in the fifth century, have exercised *de facto* a considerable power. Its members were not only supreme in military matters; they had the functions of a treasury as well as those of a war-office, and were concerned in raising the funds which they required. They had charge of foreign affairs; and they must even have exercised some sort of discretionary power, in order to discharge their duties of preventing and punishing treason, and protecting the democratic constitution. They were appointed by election, and not by lot: on them depended much of the security of the Athenian democracy; and they supplied along with the Council something of that executive strength which a democracy particularly needs. Defective as was the executive, the judicature was perhaps more defective. It was thoroughly democratic: as in Teutonic antiquity, so at Athens, a distinction was drawn between the judge, who presided and conducted the legal proceedings, and the "judgment-finders," a body of some hundreds of members, who found the verdict. The whole body of judgment-finders constituted the *Heliaea*, which consisted during the fourth century of all who applied for a place on the list, and which "as representing the community, formed the supreme court of justice".¹ It might sit as a body, or in larger or smaller sections, containing from 201 to 2,501 members. The verdict of historians upon this popular judicature was one of condemnation. The judges were ignorant of the law: their decisions were biassed either by a sentimental impulse or an actual bribe. To few was an even-handed justice measured out according to the law, and least of all to the rich, whom sycophants were only too eager to accuse before a court which was only too ready to condemn. A

¹ Gilbert, p. 393.

of Socrates, and of Plato. The high music of Pericles' speech in the second book of Thucydides celebrates Athens as the model and type for the imitation of Greece. In her the unfolding of human capacity in every direction was best attained: in her were the sisters, Equality and Liberty, to be found together. All her citizens were equal before the law in their private differences; all had an equal chance of public distinction. Personal merit was the one qualification of office; birth counted for no more than character, and poverty was not allowed to obscure any man, who could be of service to his country. So were her citizens all free, alike in their relations to the State, and in the conduct of their social life. In the same spirit Thucydides makes Athenagoras defend democracy at Syracuse: it is the rule of all, and not, like oligarchy, of a section; and while the rich are the best guardians of property, the wise the cleverest in council, and the people the best judges of a case which has been discussed in their presence, all these classes and all these claims have an equality of rights in a democracy. But Thucydides' own judgment, like that of Aristotle, is in favour of a very moderate form of democracy: the temporary constitution of 411, which gave affairs into the hands of a limited assembly, and which Thucydides defines as a mixture of democracy and oligarchy, wins from him the measured praise, that this was the occasion in his own days when the Athenians seemed most to have had a good government. Socrates, as we have already seen, condemned democracy, because it trusted to the lot, and encouraged the ignorant to pretend to an art of which they knew nothing; because its sovereign assembly consisted of men, whose one thought was to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market,¹ and who knew nothing of the art of the statesman; because, in a word, his creed was the value of knowledge, and democracy disdained knowledge. Plato could not love Athenian democracy, which his master had condemned, and which had condemned his master; and we have seen that in the *Republic* he sets democracy below oligarchy, on the ground of its lack of political knowledge and excess of political selfishness. Its psychological basis is to him desire—the mere desire for en-

Views of
democracy
entertained
Thucydides,
Plato, and
Aristotle

¹ *Mem.*, iii., 7, 6.

his conception of democracy with modern conceptions¹ we not forget, that while modern thought tends to regard democracy in its ideal meaning, Aristotle, while aware of that, looks rather to its actual results. To him it is a part of the present: to us, it would appear, it is the goal of the future. To him, therefore, it was the rule of a section, a part: to us it is the rule of the whole, assumed rather than proved to be for the weal of the whole. Ideally, indeed, it may be admitted, or rather contended, democracy is the only true government. All government is based on will; and a true government involves a perfectly full and free expression of the will. But all government is really based, we must add, on a moral will; and a perfect government really involves that the ~~which~~ will which is fully and freely expressed shall be a moral will. This lies the danger of democracy. In practice democracy may well come to mean for us much the same as it did for Aristotle. The people may put burdens heavy to be borne upon itself, and will a selfish will, when it becomes conscious of its weakness: it may vote for the things that are pleasant, and refuse to do things that are good, if these good things be presented, as they generally are, with an unpalatable harsh outer rind. Like the people in Book VIII., the people requires ever to be told what it ought to do but never what it is able to do; "for if a lion knew his strength, hard were it for any man to rule him".² Even Rousseau, we trust the people to will its true good, it will require, as Rousseau admitted, to be told what its true good is: there must reside somewhere in the State an exegetic authority.

It must be admitted that, with the nation-state as the focus of politics, democracy can never be what it was in the days of the city-state. Ancient democracy was that of the primary

city-state. Modern democracy combined with representative institutions. Ancient democracy was that of the primary city-state. Modern democracy combined with representative institutions. The size of the modern State involves representative institutions. It must be as it were a filtering of the *vox populi*, and from

for such a comparison see a paper by Professor Mackenzie, *Int. Journ. of Ethics*, 1906. He points out that Plato and Aristotle, like Ruskin and Mill in modern times, condemn not democracy as a principle, but particular abuses of democracies.

This seems harsh; but I have attempted to bring into prominence the point contained in the Aristotelian point of view.

varieties of
oligarchy

cination of Athens, or even the attraction of Venice—unless the name oligarchy be given to the constitution of Sparta. But in the Greece of Aristotle's day the conception of oligarchy was always present as a rival by the side of that of democracy; and Aristotle, who was naturally impelled to its closer study for that reason, had also the additional motive for an examination of its various forms, that he hoped to realise the best practical State by fusing oligarchy with democracy in what we now call a mixed constitution. In determining the varieties of oligarchy, Aristotle uses the same clues which served him in distinguishing the varieties of democracy—the social character of the predominant authority, and the degree of its respect for law. Once more he discovers four main varieties. In the first or moderate form, the predominant authority is composed of a class determined by a property qualification sufficiently high to exclude the multitude of the poor, but elastic enough to admit to full rights all those who may come to satisfy its requirements. In such a State there is no exclusive class fenced by insuperable barriers: there is a regular ladder of ascent, which any man may climb if he can. In an oligarchy of this character, which is closely related to the "polity," Aristotle suggests¹ that a double qualification should be established, the higher of which must be satisfied in order to attain the higher offices, the lower alone for the less important. Such a scheme, while excluding the poor, will yet broaden the basis of the constitution by admitting successive relays of the people to office. It will make the privileged class stronger, if less numerous, than the unprivileged; while the possibility of one day rising into the ranks of the privileged will of itself render the unprivileged class content. In such a constitution power will thus rest with men possessed of moderate incomes, who are neither so wealthy that they will naturally have leisure for political aggrandisement, nor so poor that they have to be maintained by the State in an artificial leisure, which they abuse in the same way as the excessive rich. The constitution will accordingly be distinguished, like the better democracies, by the sovereignty of law: the deliberative, composed (one would imagine) of the whole of the privileged class, though Aristotle seems to imply that it only consists

¹ Book viii. (vi.), c. vi.

members elected from that class (1298 a 36), will not attempt introduce innovations in the teeth of the law. A constitution of this kind has many advantages: on the other hand, in the average it makes between the unprivileged class and the privileged, and between the two sections of the privileged, it has defects. But such a cleavage is inevitable in oligarchy, and there is a *carrière ouverte*: a man may "thrive" (as it were) "to sign-right". In the second variety of oligarchy this feature appears: not only is the qualification for admission into the privileged class higher, but such admission does not follow instantly upon the possession of that qualification, and election by the members of the privileged class is also necessary. The privileged class has strengthened and stereotyped itself, and it presses its strength by this provision; but it is not strong enough to override the law, although it thus adapts the law to its own altered position. In the third variety the process of stereotyping the privileged class is complete: there has been a *rata del maggior consiglio*, as there was at Venice; and the son succeeds to the privilege of his father. Even yet the law remains; but in the fourth variety it disappears. A close hereditary caste marks this variety, as it does the third; but this caste has flung away the restraint of law, and strong in its wealth and connections, it rules like the assembly of an extreme democracy, according to its own caprice. To this variety Aristotle gives the name of "dynasty": in his view, it is of all governments, save tyranny, the most unstable; and only a strict observance of good order can preserve it from ruin.

This sketch of the varieties of oligarchy wears the appearance of an *a priori* history of the genesis of extreme oligarchy, rather than of an analysis of actual varieties. It would be difficult, and indeed impossible, to fit into this scheme the oligarchies which Aristotle himself mentions in the *Politics*. For this the practical purpose, which underlies the whole of Aristotle's analysis, is responsible. It is not his aim to analyse for the sake of analysis, but to analyse for the aid and instruction of the practical reformer. Such a scheme of oligarchies as has just been sketched may be of service to the reformer, by enabling him to take the bearings of the constitution with which he has to deal: it is hardly intended to be anything more.

the breadth of its basis, was still further secured by the example and protection of Athens: oligarchy, naturally insecure, had to add its shield and buckler in the support of Sparta. It might seem a denationalised, unpatriotic thing (though, as we have seen, patriotism was loyalty to a form of constitution, according to Aristotle's doctrine, and in that sense the members of an oligarchical clique were thoroughly patriotic); and it tended, owing to its want of native root and its half-alien character, to grow itself, as tyranny in a similar position did, into a policy of terrorism. Something of an economic motive may have entered into this policy: the propertied classes may have had to face supererogation and socialism to face. The cry for "abolition of debts and redistribution of the land" was not unknown, as the speech of the Athenian dicast shows; and Plato, in the sketch of constitutional change which he gives in the *Republic*, strongly emphasises the force of economic considerations. And thus, from the consideration of oligarchy and democracy alike, the same fundamental result emerges—that Greek politics were moving fast towards a warfare of classes. Political selfishness was leading to political disruption. Democracy used its powers in practice to confiscate the property of the rich by judicial processes: it had sometimes a theoretical programme which spoke of things like the abolition of capital and the nationalisation of land. Capital and the landed interest, on the other hand, sought to defend themselves against the people and "the people's friend" (*προστάτης*), by acquiring political power for themselves, and using it in their own interests.

THE MIXED CONSTITUTION ¹

§ 4. Against all these tendencies Plato and Aristotle preached. They taught a political theory of the unity and solidarity of the State, and of the unselfishness of the State's authority. Plato emphasised only too strongly, in Aristotle's judgment, the need of unity: he attempted, by means which were only too drastic, to provide for the exercise of "political art" in the unselfish spirit which should attend the exercise of all arts. But to Aristotle himself, as much as to Plato, the State is an association in common life directed to a common good: to him too the ultimate need of a non-sectarian government.

¹ See vi. (iv.), c. vii.-ix.; xi.-xii.; and cf. iii., c. vii., and ii., c. ix., xi.

represented the weight attached to numbers) had power, in certain cases, to decide what subjects should be introduced; and it had always the right of discussing whatever was actually introduced, and of giving the final decision. There were also oligarchical features: wealth was a qualification for certain offices; and the fact that an important office like the Board of Five was filled by co-optation, and that this board nominated the Hundred, almost approximated Carthage to a "dynasty". But virtue was also a qualification for office at Carthage: offices were unpaid, and they went by election, not by lot; and these facts attested the presence of aristocratic elements in the constitution. Carthage had, however, some defects as a mixture: the democratic and the oligarchic elements were both pushed to an excess. The powers assigned both to the assembly and to the Board of Five were too extensive; and in the actual working of the constitution, the oligarchical element played far too great a part. Offices were as a matter of fact bought by their holders; and this made wealth the aim both of politicians and of the people, who always tend to imitate their rulers. This criticism might with equal weight have been passed upon Sparta; but in the Sixth book Aristotle extols Sparta as an excellent example of a proper mixture. It is the test of a State which attempts to mix democratic and oligarchic institutions, that it should be able to be called both a democracy and an oligarchy, according as attention is paid to this or that feature of the constitution. Sparta satisfies this test.¹ It may be called a democracy, if regard is paid to the equality of social life maintained in the training and at the common tables, or to the general equality of access to the great office of the Ephorate; but it may equally be called an oligarchy, in view of the fact that the offices are elective, and the highest judicial powers are restricted to a few officials. The attitude adopted towards the Spartan constitution in the Second book is far more critical. Aristotle indeed admits, that on the principle that it is well with the State which has the support of all its citizens, Sparta may be

¹ It is to be noticed that Aristotle here speaks of Sparta as a mixture of oligarchy and democracy. Respecting as it does the claims of virtue, it should be called a mixture of aristocracy and democracy; but the term oligarchy would seem to be loosely used.

the good citizens himself, and the bad he will punish by means of his agents. He will adorn the city as if he were its guardian rather than its tyrant: he will act as if he were steward of the city's interests, and not a seeker of his own advantage. He will tax lightly and spend rightly: he will give a public account of his incomings and outgoings; and playing the part of servant and guardian and steward, he will hide his private authority under the cloak of official duty. He will speak of "reasons of State" and the "Commonwealth": he will speak of the "Crown" rather than the king, the "State" rather than the government. So shall his days be prolonged, and he himself shall become, if not a good man, yet at any rate not a bad man, and die the half of an honest man, if also the half of a knave.

EPILOGUE

THE HISTORY OF THE *POLITICS*¹

IN the autumn of 336 B.C. Alexander asked and obtained from the deputies of the Greek cities assembled at ^{The death of the city-state}, what his father had obtained two years before, the title of generalissimo of Greece with full powers for the conclusion of the war against Persia. At the same time he called a convention, which his father had also made before, "recognised Hellas as a confederacy under the Macedonian prince as imperator".² By this convention existing conditions were guaranteed: no city was to attack, or to aid refugees in attacking, any other city; and every city was to discourage confiscations and spoliations, re-divide estates and abolition of debts. Without and within, peace was thus secured; but it was secured by the institution of a federal authority with a power of federal execution. The provisions of the convention ran: "The council (*ἐδρεύοντες*) and those appointed for the common protection shall see that in the contracting cities there are no confiscations or outlawries in contravention of existing laws". This, then, was the end of political selfishness and civil strife. It was the enlightened monarchy which Plato had suggested, the mediating middle class on which Aristotle set his hopes, the power to save the city-state; and to be rescued from itself to lose its cherished independence. Henceforth the political thought of the Greeks was destined to flow in other channels. The Macedonian Empire, which had destroyed the city as the real and effective unit of politics, did not, indeed, develop any political theory of empire to take the

¹ For the history of the *Republic*, see Appendix B.

² Grote, xi., 340.

Stoic cosmo-
politanism

place of the old theory of the city. It acted rather as a bridge by which thought passed from the narrow unit of the city to the whole world; and the political theory which it helped to produce was that of cosmopolitanism. This theory is prominent in Stoicism. Zeno, the great Stoic, taught, as we have seen, that men should not live scattered in separate demes and cities with separate laws; the whole world should form one city, with one order and one law. "The poet hath said, Dear City of Cecrops," wrote a later Stoic; "wilt thou not also say, Dear City of God?" Here, as with the Cynics, cosmopolitanism is connected with individualism. The wise man will determine his life for himself—according to the law of the world. He will not be instructed or habituated by a city: he will of himself make it his aim to live "conformably to Nature". To live conformably to Nature was to live by a law which no man had enacted, and which was the same for all: it was to live in a city of God which no man had made, and which included all who had wisdom enough to enter—bond as well as free. A spiritual city, with a spiritual law, thus superseded for the Stoic the city visible, and its enacted and written law. He retired from things visible upon things unseen:¹ he became a subject of the kingdom of Heaven, ruled by a spiritual law; and he entered into that kingdom by his own spiritual insight. It is obvious that we are here in the circle of ideas of Christianity. We are moving from the *πόλις* to the Universal Church, whose law is of God and its citizenship by faith. It was natural that the Fathers of the Church should borrow, as they did, the political theory of the Stoics—its conceptions of a universal communion, a natural law, and the equality of all men before that law.²

Yet the Stoics had not departed utterly from the *πόλις* or from statutory law. Though the wise man was sufficient without any city, and though his true State was the world, he would not abandon the city of his birth. *Noblesse oblige*, and the

¹ "The service of the gods needed no temple, education (which was only disgraced by popular methods) no schools, justice no courts, commerce no exchange, sexual intercourse no restriction by the ties of marriage" (Henkel, *Stoicism* p. 99).

² Stoicism thus departs from Aristotle in two ways. It deserts the *polis* for the cosmopolis; and it abandons slavery (which was the basis of the *polis*), asserting the equality of all men in the "city of God".

ise man will legislate for his citizens ; he will join in the social life of his city by marriage ; he will even meet danger and death for its sake.¹ Stoic philosophers even indulged in the construction of ideal States. What engaged the attention of the Stoics most was the theory of the mixed constitution. Using Sparta as their model, they advocated, as we have seen, a mixture of monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy as the ideal form of constitution. Retaining in this way, and even seeking to improve, the city and its government, they also left room for its laws. They distinguished between *φύσις* and *θέσις*, Nature and Convention ; but they did not include all enacted law in the sphere of convention. On the contrary, in the manner of Heraclitus, they regarded enacted law as an emanation from natural law ; and they were able to keep together, and in harmony, the conception of a *jus naturale* and a *jus civile*. In the conception of a mixed constitution, and in that of a natural law which does not destroy, but may inform and improve the law of the State, the Stoics greatly influenced the Romans.²

But while the conception of a city might thus be retained by the Stoics, the march of history inevitably destroyed its meaning. Political
theory of
Church The world-empire of Alexander, succeeded by centuries of universal domination by Rome, made the world the one actual unit of politics ; and the teaching of the Christian Church, which recognised one body of all the faithful, strengthened by a spiritual sanction the trend of secular affairs. Political philosophy became the philosophy of universal empire : in 1300 the *De Monarchia* of Dante still shows this width of view. But at the same time that the unit of political thought gained in extension, it lost in intensity of meaning. Membership of a universal empire in any case means but little ; but membership of any secular organisation, however great or small, could mean little indeed to minds imbued with Christianity, and counting things spiritual the only things of price. The State came to be

¹ Ritter and Preller (8th ed.), § 523.

² The political teaching of the Epicureans was not so immediately fruitful ; but its central tenet of a social contract was destined to exercise a great influence in modern Europe. The Epicurean definition of the State regarded it as based on "a covenant neither to injure nor to be injured". The State was thus based on mere utility ; and law was identified with the terms of a contract. For what is practically the Epicurean position, cf. *supra*, p. 99.

of Aristotle did, through the Arabs. It had not attracted the scholars of Cordova, who confined their Aristotelian studies to his logical and metaphysical writings. Averroes wrote on politics; but he only wrote a paraphrase of the *Republic* of Plato—a paraphrase of no originality, which stolidly accepts, and amplifies or illustrates, Plato's most novel suggestions, proving, for instance, that women are suited for war by the example of certain African tribes. There was no basis in Arabic politics and civilisation for the building of an Aristotelian system of politics. It was quite otherwise in the Christian West. The growth of political theory in the Church had prepared the way for the "reception" of some of the main Aristotelian ideas: the struggle of empire and papacy, since 1076, had produced a shower of pamphlets, *libelli de lite imperatorum et pontificum*, and given a new impulse to political thought; while the vigorous political life of the thirteenth century, especially visible in England, formed a natural soil for the new seed.

The distinction between king and tyrant is one very old in the Fathers.¹ The Gospels spoke of obedience to the powers that be; but a distinction had to be drawn between the powers that be and the powers that ought not to be,² and here the Old Testament, with its story of the rejection of Saul, was a natural fountain of inspiration. Chrysostom already suggests the distinction; and it appears in the *Etymology* of St. Isidore of Seville, a work which formed one of the great repertoires of the Middle Ages.³ The true king is distinguished from the tyrant by one great feature: he rules under the limitation of law. St. Augustine, the chief source of political thought before the reception of Aristotle, was understood in the ninth century as teaching that the king is bound by the law; and Hincmar of Reims sustains the theory of limited monarchy, quoting the dictum of St. Augustine, "that men judge the laws when they

Preparation
for Aristotle

¹ I have endeavoured to show, in the next two paragraphs, that, while the essence of the ecclesiastical theory of the State was anti-Aristotelian, there were elements in that theory which might be harmonised with Aristotle.

² This is the problem attacked by St. Thomas in his commentary on the *Sentences*, *super Distinct.* xlv. (quoted by Janet, *Hist. de la Sci. Polit.*, i., 418-19).

³ Carlyle, *Medieval Political Theory*, i., 222, n. 2; Isidore distinguishes *rex* and *tyrannus*.

by Henry III., that the will of the prince has the force of law :

quod imperaret
Suomet arbitrio singulos ligaret.¹

To this principle he replies by a direct negative :

Legem quoque dicimus regis dignitatem
Regere, nam credimus esse legem lucem,
Sine qua concludimus deviare ducem.²

The writer "has never heard that *rex* is *lex* ; but he holds it most common and true that *lex* is *rex* " :

Ista lex sic loquitur : per me regnant reges,
Per me jus ostenditur hijs qui condunt leges.
Istam legem stabilem nullus rex mutabit,
Sed se variabilem per istam firmabit.³

If the king be thus under the law, he must rule for the common weal, since law is the ordinance of those things which tend hereunto :

Et rex nichil proprium preferat communi,
Quia salus omnium sibi cessit uni ;
Non enim preponitur sibimet victurus,
Sed ut hic qui subditur populus securus.⁴

Further, the friar contends (in an argument which shows a very true conception of the real meaning of liberty), in limitation by the law lies true liberty ; and "to force a king to be free," a people may have to resist him when he becomes a slave to passion and tyranny.

Non omnis artificio privat libertatem,
Non omnis districtio tollit potestatem. . . .
Qui regem custodiunt ne peccet temptatus,
Ipsi regi serviunt, quibus esse gratus
Sit, quod ipsum liberant ne sit servus factus,
Quod ipsum non superant a quibus est tractus.⁵

But this corollary of lawful resistance is only drawn *in extremis* : in normal times a milder result follows from the limitation of the king to the pursuit of his people's good, and that is the need of parliamentary institutions :

Igitur *communitas regni* consulatur,
Et quid universitas sentiat sciatur.⁶

¹ Lines 503-4.

⁴ Lines 893-96.

² Lines 848-50.

⁵ Lines 667-68 ; 688-92.

³ Lines 865-68.

⁶ Lines 765-66.

not be regarded as a widening of Aristotle to suit the conditions of modern times—as an attempt to find room, within the categories of the *Politics*, for two new things, the Church, and popular legislatures. Nor can it be said that Marsilio was hampered by thinking in Aristotelian forms. It would be truer to say that Aristotle taught Marsilio how to think. Marsilio learned from Aristotle truer doctrines of the origin and aim of the State than those which the contractarian school compounded from Roman law and the Hebrew Scriptures.

What has been said of Marsilio and his relation to Aristotle's political science may be said of Nicholas Oresme and his relation to Aristotle's economics. His *Tractatus de mutatione metarum* is based, as we have seen, on the first book of the *Politics*; and Oncken's judgment of this treatise might be applied, word for word, to the *Defensor Pacis*: "where he agrees with Aristotle, he shows a correct understanding of his views, and where he departs from him, he shows independent original reflection and a keen sense for the real truth". But perhaps the most famous author who is indebted to the *Politics* is Machiavelli. When Machiavelli wrote, the Greek text had been printed by the Aldine Press (1498); and a new translation, the first since the *Vetus Versio*, had been made by Lionardo Retino, early in the fifteenth century, and printed along with a commentary of St. Thomas in 1492.¹ The sixteenth century was the great age of editions and translations of the *Politics*; and modern political theory, which begins with Machiavelli, is nurtured upon Aristotle from its birth. The Prince, it has been said,² is a commentary on the last chapter of Aristotle's book on the theory of Revolutions. Machiavelli follows Aristotle's classification of States;³ but he is most concerned with a prince, especially a new prince or usurper, the tyrant of Aristotle. Both Machiavelli and Aristotle condemn the tyrant. For the tyrant, he is a man without virtue, faith, piety, or religion, a man with no glory, but only power; to the other, "in no respect

¹ This translation is connected with the name of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, the first English patron of the scholars of the Renaissance.

² Lutoslavski: *Die Einteilung und Untergang der Staatsverfassungen nach Aristoteles, und Machiavelli*.

³ Or, according to Henkel (*Studien*, p. 106), Polybius' version of the accepted Greek classification.

city, but transferred it whole and entire to a new authority, the people. Like Aristotle, he believed in the moral mission of the State. He may indeed sometimes speak of the State as a corruption from the simple state of Nature. But in the *Contrat Social* there are hints, and indeed pronouncements, of a very different theory. The State appears, not as a corruption, but as the perfection, of man, as introducing a true morality, which did not exist in the instinctive stage of Nature. It is defined as *un être moral collectif*—a definition which comes near to the Aristotelian view of the State as “an association for good life”. This moral collective being has two wills—a true will, set to the collective good, which is called the general will; and a false will, set to the individual good of the several members, which is called the will of all. Just as Aristotle believed that the State must habituate its members in a good life, so Rousseau believed that the State must endeavour to force the true will upon the individual. Nor is it not only in these fundamentals that Rousseau is Aristotelian. He came from a city-state, Geneva, and the State which he desires to institute is a city-state after the old Greek model. It is, in size, to be a mean between excess and defect: its institutions, we are told, should aim at equality, but they must suit the genius of the people and the circumstances of its territory. Finally, though to Rousseau, as to Marsilio, the people is the true legislature, room is yet made, because the people do not always know what to legislate, for a single legislator (who is particularly Aristotelian in character), to supply the defects of their knowledge.

To Hegel, as to Plato, the State is a product of mind—the sphere of “Mind Objective”. But Objective Mind issues not only in the State: it issues in a triad—in Law and in the Morality of conscience, as well as in the “Social Ethics” of the State. Law, morality, and political obligation are all phases of mind, expressing itself in an “ought”. Here Political Science definitely returns to its old ethical connection. Indeed there is no separate political science: there is simply a philosophy of mind as it manifests itself in action, and the State is one of those manifestations. But it is the highest and greatest. To Hegel there is an ascent from law to morality, and from morality to the social ethics of a State. Law is a

APPENDIX A

A NEWSPAPER ENTITLED *OBSERVATIONS ON THE POLITICS*

~~There~~ was apparently a revival of interest in Aristotle as a result of the Civil War ; and Hobbes' venom against Aristotle may perhaps be explained by the fact that his writings served as a basis for the revolutionaries. A newspaper¹ appeared in 1654, entitled *Observations, Historical, Political and Philosophical upon Aristotle's First Book of Political Government: together with a Narrative of State Affairs in England, Scotland and Ireland, etc.* Only six numbers appeared, and the *Observations* only extended to the first six sections of the first book. In the first number there are about two and a half pages of observations to one and a half of news: in the second there are six pages of observations and two of news. "I shall for thy direction," the author says, "present thee with this taper that I have lighted at Aristotle's bright candle, or Lamp of Reason, in his Eight Book of Politik Government, who (we promise diligently to observe the Lord Loys, le Roy)² (*sic*) calleth just Politik Government a lawful art". If it be objected that Aristotle ought not "to be published to common view," he urges, "truly they may as well say that the Bible ought not to be published". "I shall show the happiness of those people that live under such a government, where it is the duty of the governors to rule by Law, as the Lord Protector here hath sworn to do." The newspaper is to be "a school to teach the art of just preserving politic government: it shall also show the causes of changes in all governments since the beginning; as also rules for prevention of such changes". The author puts it "forward into the world in such parcels, because the beginning may be useful in this time of needful searching out of perfection in government, as well to temper and enlighten the minds of the people, as for information of those that shall be called to the Trust of Government". He knows that the work

¹ I owe my knowledge of this newspaper, and the opportunity of reading it, to the kindness of Professor Firth.

² See next page.

APPENDIX B

THE LATER HISTORY OF THE *REPUBLIC*.

COMPARED with the *Politics*, the *Republic* has no history. For a thousand years it simply disappeared. From the days of Proclus, a Neo-Platonist of the fifth century, almost until the days of Mario Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, at the end of the fifteenth century, the *Republic* was practically a lost book. It is said of Proclus that he used to assert, that "if it were in his power, he would withdraw from the knowledge of men, for the present, all ancient books except the *Timæus* and the Sacred Oracles".¹ His wish was filled. What the Middle Ages knew of Plato came from a Latin translation of a large part of the *Timæus*, made by Chalcidius in the fourth century, and from the references in Aristotle, in Cicero, Augustine and Macrobius, in Apuleius' *De Dogmate Platonis*, and in Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophi*, the great commonplace book on which so many generations drew.² Something of the *Republic* was retained in Cicero's *De Republica*. Along with the praise of the mixed constitution, which Cicero had borrowed from later Greek writers, the *De Republica* contains a translation of Plato's sketch of democracy, an imitation of his picture of tyranny, and, above all, in the *Somnium Scipionis*, an adaptation of the myth of Er, which greatly influenced later thought, and was the foundation of Charlemagne's hopes of heaven.³ St. Augustine, though he had but little acquaintance with Greek literature, quoted largely from the *De Republica* in his own *De Civitate Dei* (a picture, like Plato's *Republic*, of a city in the heavens), and in this way helped to preserve the Platonic tradition. The *De Consolatione Philosophi* of Boethius is as

¹ Sandys, *History of Classical Scholarship*, pp. 366-67.

² John the Scot knew Greek, and quotes the *Timæus* in Latin which is not borrowed from Chalcidius; while Henry Aristippus, the deacon of Salerno, translated the *Meno* and the *Phædo* in the Norman kingdom of Sicily.

³ Burckhardt, *The Renaissance in Italy*, p. 546.

chiefly on its technical side, and as meaning a training in some trades ; for every citizen of Utopia must practise a trade as well as agriculture, and alternate regularly between the two—a suggestion which shows us again More's modern and unplatonic view of labour.

In his attitude towards woman More is, in some respects, very like Plato. He believes in the emancipation of women : he believes that women are able to do the same work as men. As in the *Republic*, the women of Utopia bear offices : as in the *Republic*, they go to war. It is not all who fight ; and it is only the priestly offices which women can hold. Nor is there any community of wives : More believes in monogamy. There is perhaps something of Plato's physical point of view in the suggestion that bride and bridegroom should see each other nude before marriage, in order that they may know that they are fitted for matrimony ; but that is the only approach towards Plato's attitude to the sexual question. There is no attempt to regulate population, except by the system of colonies, which Aristotle¹ precatates as a mere palliative (*supra*, p. 397, note 1).

It would thus appear that More, on the whole, is Platonic in the letter, and not in the spirit. He is rather "the father of modern Utopian socialism," than an imitator of Plato's communism. His aim is equality of enjoyment for all : it was the aim of Plato to secure perfection of knowledge for the few. In Plato intellectualism leads to the philosopher king and the rule of the all-wise Cæsar : More smiles at the idea of what the King of France would say to his Utopia. There is nothing of the ascetic despotism of the Idea in More : his motto is (as R. L. Stevenson wrote)—"Let cheerfulness abound with industry". Both in the *Republic* and in the *Utopia* there is some trace of religious reformation ; but the difference is striking and suggestive. Plato would reform Greek mythology into a uniform conception of God : More advocates a quiet and happy toleration of all beliefs. *Quod credendum putaret, liberum cuique reliquit.*²

¹ The plan on which towns are constructed in Utopia reminds one of what Aristotle says of Hippodamus (*supra*, p. 415). See Michels and Ziegler, xxi.

² Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato*, iii., ccxxvi.-ccxxviii., compares the *Utopia* with Campanella's *City of the Sun*, a work which belongs to the beginning of the seventeenth century. Campanella was a Dominican friar. He advocates Platonic communism both in respect of property and of wives ; but his work, "though borrowed from Plato, shows but a superficial acquaintance with his writings". He knows something of Aristotle, however, and defends community of property against his criticisms. "The most interesting feature of the book, common to Plato (?) and Sir Thomas More, is the deep feeling which is shown by the writer of the misery and ignorance prevailing among the lower classes in his own time." As compared with More, Campanella is far more Platonic in the prominence which he gives to

In conclusion, it may be suggested that the history of Plato's influence on political and social thought is to be seen, not only in the history of his writings, but also in the history of the writings of his pupils. The pupil exercised a far greater influence than his master; the master had set his mark deeply on the pupil, and the influence of the pupil was also that of the master. If men for centuries have applied the doctrine of Final Causes to politics—if they conceived of the State as a moral institution—if they distinguished selfish government from governments that were unselfish, and taught that every ruler should seek the "common weal" of his flock—were they not following Plato, who had first taught all these things? We have spoken of Hegel under the rubric of the influence of the *Politics*; it would have been wiser, perhaps, to detect in Hegel the fulfilment of the ideal of the *Republic*.¹

education. "He looks forward to a new mode of education, which is the study of nature, and not of Aristotle." A peculiarity of his system was his belief in the efficacy of allegorical paintings, with which the seven circles of the walls of his city are to be decorated. Another feature is a system of confession to the authorities, by which they are kept informed of all that the citizens are thinking and doing. This reminds one of a casual suggestion of Plato in the *Laws* (*supra*, p. 204).

¹ Similarly, Rousseau may be regarded as indebted to Plato—the ideal of the *Laws*—in his *Contrat Social*. His attitude towards the influence of the State, his conception of the size of the proper State, his belief in a law of nature—all these find their parallels, if not their origins, in the *Laws*. (Cf. *Life of Rousseau*, p. 313.)

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